

FREE

Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk September 3, 2017

Mid edition No 780

EDUCATION

Head teacher crisis grips our schools

More than 40 will start term with no permanent leader in place

TRIBUTES

Remembering the People's Princess

Diana: From her Kent school days to becoming a global icon

ART

Triennial's regeneration

Big names wade in to exhibit as town flexes its artistic muscles once more

THEATRE

Author Morpurgo writes for KoS

Special article penned ahead of opening of War Horse show

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Why a shortage of heads should be major worry

ASK any teacher about the secret of a good school and invariably their reply will mention the benefits of strong and stable leadership.

All of which is somewhat worrying when it comes to the story we report on this week which highlights the dozens of Kent schools who will go into the new term, which for most starts this week, without a head teacher.

The head should be the fulcrum around which the entire ethos and attitude of the school revolves around. They should be visible, accessible and clear in their aims and attitudes. They should simultaneously be on the side of both parents and staff – a tough juggling act without a doubt – and strive for the greater good of the community they oversee.

Without that key figure, schools can drift.

Certainly head teachers are well remunerated – but then so they



Editor **Chris Britcher**

deserve to be when in charge of budgets and a significant workforce, let alone the future of hundreds, if not thousands, of our children.

But the pressures under which they operate now are becoming intolerable. The ability to balance the now necessary business acumen alongside declining incomes and what appears an increasing lack of responsibility of parents to aide them in their goals, makes the job one few are prepared to take, and many find simply too much.

League tables and Ofsted demand immediate results and immediate improvement. Failure can spell doom.

So what's the answer? Our education system is straining at the seams right now and that will only intensify unless the government eases up on such a vital public service.

Our children deserve it, and hard-working head teachers deserve it too.

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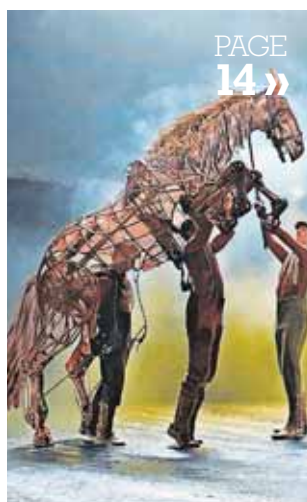
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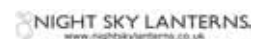
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Labour fury after £400k spent on 'vanity project'

By Tom Pyman

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THE Conservative-controlled Medway Council has been slammed for spending almost £400,000 of taxpayers' money on "a vanity project".

Opposition Labour members revealed this week the total bill for the local authority's commemorations of the 350th anniversary of the Battle of Medway - a famous naval defeat by the Dutch - was subsidised from council coffers to the tune of £389,471.

The spending included £100,563 for the civic event itself, some £244,086 for the Medway in Flames display and a further £60,054 for "land-based activities".

Sponsorship of the events generated around £48,000 of income, but the Labour group, which boycotted the events back in June, slammed the spending against a backdrop of controversial cuts, including reducing the number of children's centres in the district from 19 to 13 (see below).

Andy Stamp, Medway Labour spokesman for regeneration, said:



COMMEMORATIONS: Medway in Flames cost has sparked fury from Labour Picture: STUART THOMAS

"People were rightly angry earlier this year when it emerged £60,000 had been taken from the children's budget and £100,000 from crematorium fees to fund a fireworks display.

"It turns out that they literally didn't know the half of it.

"On the one hand our Tory cabinet pleads poverty when justifying cuts to vital services for our most vulnerable citizens.

"But on the other it is happy to

nod through a £400,000 splurge on a vanity project with no proper outcome-based targets for tourism or inward investment.

"No doubt Tory councillors had fun at taxpayers' expense at their £100,000 civic junket. With that sort of budget it must have been an absolute blast.

"However I don't think taxpayers will see the funny side."

Responding to the comments, Conservative leader Alan Jarrett

told KoS: "We are investing in regeneration and tourism and this is just a cheap shot from Labour.

"The problem is they made a big deal of boycotting it when they don't attend any heritage events, and some of them don't even sing the national anthem.

"They treat our military heritage with contempt but the people of Medway cherish it and that's why the Labour group are disrespectful."

Group tees up solution to Sandwich pressure when The Open returns

A SPECIALIST project group has been established to improve Sandwich train station and ensure it can cope with the thousands of visitors set to descend on the town for The Open golf championship in 2020.

Bosses announced back in February the tournament would return to the county for the 15th time, having last been held at Royal St George's back in 2011.

Then, The Open delivered a £77m benefit to the local economy, including some £24.14m of direct spending in Kent.

A total of 180,091 fans flocked to Sandwich in 2011 with 37,000 passengers travelling on the high speed train service, but Sandwich station struggled to cope.

It is designed to accommodate eight-carriage trains, but Southeastern used 12-carriage trains to maximise passengers during the championship. That meant the level crossing, which regulates the road access was often closed.

In addition, the existing passenger bridge over the tracks was not fit to bear the large number of passengers.

Now a specialist group, which is chaired by Kent County Council and includes representatives from Dover District Council, Network Rail, Southeastern and the Department for Transport, has been set up.

Council chiefs are proposing an extension of platforms at the station to accommodate longer trains and construction of an additional footbridge linking platform passengers to a pathway leading to the club.

A report issued to Dover councillors ahead of a cabinet meeting on Monday says the group favours a "permanent solution" estimated to cost around £3.5m as opposed to a "semi-permanent solution" which would cost around £1.5m plus another £900,000 per future event. With a permanent improvement in place, the group says it will "provide assurance for the holding of future Open events at Sandwich".

Axe to fall on six Sure Start centres after council meet

PLANS to close six children's centres in Medway were officially rubber-stamped by the council's scrutiny committee this week.

Last month, the local authority agreed that controversial plans to shut down all 19 of the Sure Start centres and replace them with four 'super hubs' were set to be scrapped following a six-week public consultation.

Subsequently, the Conservative-controlled council rowed back on its initial proposals, and instead agreed that 13 out of the 19 are maintained, with four of them becoming hubs, which would combine children's centre services for 0-5-year-olds, with early help teams who work with families and children who are aged five and upwards.

Bomb alert after workmen find shell in ragstone quarry

BOMB disposal experts were drafted in to conduct a controlled explosion after a device dropped from a German Luftwaffe during the Second World War was discovered at a ragstone quarry near Kings Hill on Thursday afternoon.

The Ministry of Defence's explosive ordnance disposal team were called in to conduct the blast

on Friday after workmen at Blaise Farm in Ashton Way revealed the bomb while working at the quarry.

It was confirmed as being a 50kg bomb dropped during a German raid.

A police spokesperson said: "There were no safety concerns for the local vicinity."

The bomb was detonated on Friday morning.



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Free shingles vaccine for county's pensioners

Pensioners across the county are being urged to protect themselves against shingles with a free vaccine.

Shingles is a very itchy, painful, burning group of blisters caused by the reactivation of the chickenpox virus. The rash commonly affects one area of the body, often the chest, and can last up to four weeks.

However for some people, pain can persist for several months, or even years, after the rash has disappeared.

Patients aged 70 or 78 years old are eligible for the shingles vaccine, while anyone who was eligible for immunisation in the previous three years of the programme but missed out on their shingles vaccination remains eligible until their 80th birthday.



HAPPY: Judge Paul Hollywood

Bake Off back with strong ratings recipe

THE Great British Bake Off's debut on Channel 4 attracted a bigger audience than any of the show's launch episodes on BBC Two - but was well down on last year's opener on BBC One.

An average of 6.5 million people tuned in to Tuesday night's episode, giving Channel 4 its highest overnight audience for five years, the broadcaster said. The figure includes those who watched the episode on Channel 4+1.

The show's new host is Sandi Toksvig, who has a home in Herne Bay, while judge Paul Hollywood lives near Canterbury.

Bake Off's biggest overnight audience for a launch episode on BBC Two was 5.6m in 2013. By contrast the show's launch on BBC One last year won an overnight average of 10.4m - almost 4m above the figure for Channel 4.

The series returned to television screens on Tuesday night.

Jay Hunt, Channel 4's chief creative officer, said: "It's fantastic to see people warming to Noel Fielding from episode one, thinking that Prue Leith very naturally stepped into Mary Berry's shoes and was excellent as a judge, and that Sandi was warm and funny and brought her own particular humour."

Channel 4 bought the show in a four-year deal for £75m.

MPs call on chancellor to bring back duty free when Brexit is complete

By Tom Pyman

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KENT MPs have joined with dozens of other Conservative politicians calling for the reinstatement of duty free sales on travel to and from the European Union after Brexit.

Charlie Elphicke, who represents Dover and Deal, and South Thanet's Craig Mackinlay are among the 40 Tory MPs who have signed a letter to Philip Hammond calling for duty free to be available for trips to Europe from March 29, 2019.

Such sales between Britain and the EU were axed by the EU in 1999 and since then they have only applied on trips outside the continent.

The letter says bringing back duty free will boost regional economies like Dover and Deal, with towns and districts home to ports and smaller airports, as well as the ferry industry and airlines, are set to benefit most.

Mr Elphicke said: "The return of duty free would deliver a real boost to Britain.

"The benefits would be felt across



BOOST: Ferry firms would benefit

the nation - particularly in coastal communities and regional airports.

"Bringing back duty free would be a real boost to the ferry industry at ports from Dover to Holyhead - as well as regional airports from Aber-

deen to the East Midlands."

Added Mr Mackinlay: "As our letter to the chancellor makes clear, if the government fails to ensure the return of duty free sales, UK citizens would be in the anomalous position that EU passengers to the UK would be able to buy duty free goods - yet UK passengers travelling to the EU will not.

"Moreover, given that duty free applies to travel to the rest of the world it would make no sense for it not to apply to Europe after Brexit.

"I am sure Mr Hammond will want to consider this matter very carefully and I hope we can look forward to a positive response."

The letter says: "These changes need to be made in good time in order to give operators time to be ready on day one of Brexit. We understand that preparations could take up to nine months for ferry firms and airport operators."

Only minor amendments to legislation on VAT, excise duty and excise goods are required to reintroduce duty free, according to industry experts.

MP cheered as hopes rise of saving mural

THE Banksy mural in Dover can be saved by the district council, according to the town's MP.

Charlie Elphicke has campaigned for the artwork, which depicts a workman on a ladder chipping away at one of the 12 stars on the European Union flag, to be maintained in the town since it first appeared in May.

The Tory applied to Historic England to have the work listed, but the public body's planning director, Dr Andrew Brown, said the building does not meet its test of "special architectural or historic interest", but confirmed the local authority does "have powers to safeguard the mural through normal development control measures".

Mr Elphicke said: "This is great news. We now know the council can save the Banksy after all - whether that's through retrospective permission, stop notices, new planning applications, or other control measures. I have passed this information to the council and urged them to do the right thing."

Plan to refurbish old station site on track

PLANS for a major investment in the Bat & Ball railway station near Sevenoaks has taken a big step forward.

Sevenoaks Town Council wants to refurbish the station building as a key part of the regeneration of the north part of the town. It has recently been subject to anti-social behaviour.

For the past year it has been working on a project that has achieved planning permission and listed building consent to refurbish the boarded up station building to provide a café, public toilets and community rooms.

It has also undertaken negotiations with Southeastern and Network Rail for a 25-year peppercorn lease which was finally completed last week.

The project has successfully passed the first stage of a Heritage Lottery Fund application. If subsequent applications prove successful, it is hoped work could begin as soon as January, with work completed by next September. A decision is due on December 1.

Plans are also progressing for the new Bat & Ball Centre on the opposite side of the railway line.

£200k Queen statue set to be approved

FINAL approval for an historic statue of Queen Elizabeth II in Gravesend is set to be given next week.

On Wednesday, planning councillors will look at a final application to install a commemorative bronze statue of Britain's longest reigning monarch in St Andrew's Gardens.

The £200,000 statue, funded privately, will be positioned in the southern part of a triangular shaped area of grass which is bordered by two of the garden's stone paths and by Crooked Lane to the front.

Facing onto Crooked Lane, the artist behind the statue, Douglas Jennings, previously sculpted the award-winning statue of Second World War squadron leader, Mahinder Singh Pujji, which also stands in the gardens near Gravesend's riverside.

If approved, as recommended by officers, one tree will be lost to make way for the statue, which is thought to be the only statue of Her Majesty seated, with installation expected in the autumn.

Hospital takes to Facebook to call for patients to avoid A&E

By Luke May

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UNDER strain hospital chiefs were forced to put out an appeal on social media to avoid using the accident and emergency (A&E) department at Darent Valley Hospital in Dartford on Tuesday as it found itself swamped with an "unprecedented demand".

More than 100 patients had already been treated by 12.30pm on Tuesday, sparking concerns nearly 400 patients could turn up at the department in a single day, in addition to ambulance arrivals.

In a bid to deter more people heading to the hospital and adding to the strain, it put a message on its Facebook page urging patients not to attend A&E unless absolutely necessary.

A spokesperson from the hospital told us: "By sending out the message we saw 302 attendances and 75 ambulances which was a marked improvement on what was predicted."

On an average day, the hospital sees just under 300 patients and 80 ambulances.

Services had settled back down by Wednesday and the cause of the spike is not known.

However, Dartford Borough Council leader Jeremy Kite said patients should use their common sense before arriving to prevent a



PRESSURE: Hospital appeal resulted in the situation easing amid fears of overload

sudden surge once again put the department under pressure.

He said: "It's incumbent on all of us to help the NHS, I know from speaking to hospital staff that they want to provide the very best service they can.

"But even they can get frustrated when some of the people who are coming in to A&E do not need such urgent care.

"Of course the NHS is under stress, we need to improve young people's health services to educate them on their bodies and make sure

they're looking after themselves.

"There are too many people, myself included, that are too unhealthy, too overweight and it is putting services under pressure."

Jonathon Hawkes, Labour leader in Dartford, added: "The pressure the NHS is under was completely reflected on Tuesday. It's not just about patients and residents knowing what service to use, our health service needs to provide the services we depend on."

Village was hottest place in the country

A VILLAGE in Kent chalked up the hottest temperature in the UK on Tuesday as we bid farewell to the bank holiday mini-heatwave in style.

Frittenden, near Staplehurst, saw the mercury rocket to 29.3 degrees C before we came crashing back down to earth on the Wednesday with temperatures being reduced by half.

Forecasters say September will be "unsettled".

Dealer caught with sock full of money

A DRUG dealer who was caught with cocaine and a sock full of cash in Chatham has been jailed.

Ryan Graham, 26, of Station Road in Rainham, was stopped by patrols as he drove through Magpie Hall Road in January this year.

Officers searched the BMW car and found cocaine and a sock full of cash totaling £260.

Pensioner burgled

A CANTERBURY woman in her 90s reportedly had cash and jewellery stolen in a burglary on Bank Holiday Monday.

Anyone with information on the incident, which took place in Church Lane, Kingston, is asked to call Kent Police on 01843 222289 quoting ZY/41047/17 or contact Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555111.

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Support blows strong for bid to increase wind farm size

THOSE living along the coast where plans are afoot to increase the size of an off-shore wind farm say they are broadly in support of the proposals.

Swedish energy firm Vattenfall wants to add a further 34 giant turbines to the Thanet Offshore Wind Farm, off the coast of Thanet and Sandwich.

There are currently 100 turbines on the site, which has been operational since 2010.

It commissioned an independent survey among those residents most affected by the extension plans.

According to the findings of the Lake Market Research work, 60 per cent of those interviewed said that Thanet Extension Offshore Wind Farm was a good idea, 29 per cent claimed they were not sure, with the remainder



saying it was not a good idea.

Helen Jameson, Vattenfall's project manager said: "It's still early days for the extension proposal and we can never take support for granted, nonetheless, it's obviously

good to hear that the survey found strong support among residents for the idea of an extension."

Vattenfall is to discuss more detailed plans with local residents in the autumn.

Josie, survivor of hammer attack, engaged to marry

JOSIE Russell, who survived a hammer attack that killed her mother and sister, has announced her engagement two decades on from the tragedy.

Lin Russell, 45, and her six-year-old daughter Megan were beaten to death on a quiet country path with a hammer as they walked home from Chillenden, near Canterbury in July 1996. Josie, then nine, was left for dead.

Michael Stone, from Gillingham, was eventually convicted of the murders.

Now, Miss Russell is a textile artist in Wales, where her father, Shaun, brought her to help recover from the ordeal.

Speaking to the Daily Mail this week, Miss Russell said she plans to marry her boyfriend of 12 years, Iwan Griffith, who

proposed last December.

She said: "It was on Christmas morning, Iwan gave me chocolates and said 'Sorry, I didn't get you much'.

"Then he produced the ring and said: 'Happy Christmas'. He did offer to get down on one knee and propose but I told him he didn't have to. It was a wonderful moment because Iwan is not only a wonderful man, he's my best friend."

Mr Griffith, 31, grew up on a farm ignorant of his partner's past. She said: "It meant things were just nice and normal from the start. He asked about my mum once and I just told him she had died. Later his parents told him the full story but we never talk about the past. It's better for me to just get on with the present."

Service for 'the Few'

THE men Sir Winston Churchill christened "the Few" during the Second World War will be honoured once again with a service of commemoration at the Battle of Britain Memorial, Capel-le-Ferne, near Folkestone on September 15. The Battle of Britain Memorial Trust holds the service each year.

Man 'naked in his car'

A CHATHAM man is to appear in court after he was reported to have been found lying naked in a car which was parked in a public road in Hollingbourne.

Mindy Fairchild, aged 52, of Meadow Bank Road, was arrested and later charged with a public order offence.

Dementia paper at UN

A FORMER head teacher from Canterbury has attended the United Nations (UN) Committee on Human Rights to present a paper on living with dementia.

Keith Oliver, diagnosed with Alzheimer's at 55, now works to raise awareness and dispel myths around the disease.

Trapped woman saved

FIREFIGHTERS dramatically removed the roof of a car to rescue a woman who was trapped after being involved in a smash in Cranbrook.

Two vehicles collided in Glassenbury Road just after 5pm on Monday, as emergency services rushed to the scene.

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Grammar in legal threat

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

LEGAL action is being pursued after a grammar school withdrew places for a number of A-level students who failed to achieve certain grades.

Simpson Millar solicitors have initiated judicial review proceedings against the governing body of St Olave's Grammar School in Orpington after two students were told they could not continue their A-level studies into Year 13.

The pupils, who cannot be named for legal reasons, failed to achieve Bs in any of their subjects taken in the first year of sixth form, lawyers said.

Days ago they were told they could return to the school but only to study a BTEC in health and social care.

The school, which will start its new term on September 5, is said to operate a three-pronged policy to "maintain its exceptional A-level results".

Year 12 pupils will normally have gained three Bs or higher if they wish to complete their studies in Year 13, the school's sixth form rules and regulations state.

If a student scored a C, they must sign an agreement that the school reserves the right not to enter them for A-level examinations in any subject in which it is considered they will not



PRESSURE: St Olave's is a high-performing school in Orpington. Picture: PA

score a B or above.

The claimants are contesting the policy on the grounds it does not "safeguard and promote the welfare of the children at the school, and is irrational".

It is unlawful, they say, because "the school does not have the power to exclude pupils between Year 12 and Year 13 due to an alleged lack of academic progression".

Education lawyer Imogen Jolley, of Simpson Millar, said: "In maintained school sixth forms there may be grade boundaries to get in, but once you are in the only way they can get rid of you is if there is a behaviour issue. It would be unlawful to exclude a pupil for a reason such as academic attainment or ability."

The Department for Education said it would not comment while legal

proceedings were ongoing, but issued guidance on its exclusion policies.

The London Borough of Bromley, which is listed as an interested party, said it would not comment due to the legal proceedings. The school has so far refused to comment.

A hearing to determine whether a judicial review will be granted is due to take place on September 20.

Euro cash for dementia site

ALMOST £3.5m of European funding has been approved to help develop a dementia village in Dover.

East Kent Hospitals, Kent County Council as well as a host of partners from across east Kent and the wider continent have secured the cash to enable people with the illness to lead healthier and more independent lives.

Work has been completed on the pre-planning application phase of the development, earmarked for the former Buckland Hospital site, which will lead to a final design being submitted to Dover District Council.

Fears for dogs stuck in cars

THE RSPCA fears more dogs will die locked inside sweltering cars after receiving more than a dozen calls from the county, and almost 400 nationwide, during the recent warm weather.

In Kent, the charity received some 13 reports of animals in hot environments between Monday, August 21 and Bank Holiday Monday, August 28 when a mini heatwave swept across the country.

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Fears growing as dozens of our schools do not have head teacher

Union accuses government of 'bullying' many out of the job with increased demands, and although interim chiefs are in place for start of new term, 45 Kent schools have no permanent leader in place

By Tom Pyman

Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

HEAD teachers across the county are leaving the profession in droves due to being "bullied" by government expectations, a union chief has said.

It has emerged this week that there are some 45 schools around Kent set to kick off the academic year without a head teacher in charge - up from 40 in September 2016.

While Kent County Council insists "robust interim leadership arrangements" are in place in each case, there are fears over the potential impact on both pupils and staff across the county.

Christine Dickinson, Kent secretary of the National Union of Teachers, told KoS: "I'm very concerned because this is not just a local issue it's a national one."

"Head teachers these days have a very difficult life because they are judged on Ofsted results and academic results which is a very two-dimensional way of looking at what a head is doing."

"They are being bullied from above by government expectations."

"Because of this, you then get young and inexperienced people taking up headships and they don't have skills in man-management, for example, which is just as important as producing results."

"If they don't get the required results, they get rid of them, rather than offering them the time and support to

develop."

"We're also seeing many taking a business-like approach where they employ an executive head on a huge salary and they're so far from the chalkface, while those actually doing the job are not getting enough."

"I would like to see the local authority allowed to take a greater role in supporting the head teachers."

The Department for Education was contacted for a response to Ms Dickinson's comments but did not respond at the time of going to press.

Education consultant and former Gravesend head teacher Peter Read said he was "not surprised" to hear about the figures and shared many of the union chief's concerns.

"There are many reasons for this but the main one is because people simply don't want to become head teachers and put themselves in the firing line," he said.

"When you look at the number being sacked and the demands that are put on them, it's no wonder."

"You need stability in a school and some academies in particular have a considerable turnover."

"Without a substantive head setting policies and standards from year-to-year, it impacts enormously on teachers and pupils who need that stability."

"Government policy is putting pressure on schools, league tables, academy chains."

"The job description of a head teacher is enormous and you've got to relieve some of the pressure."

Kent County Council's children's young people and education cabinet

committee meets next week at County Hall in Maidstone to discuss recruitment and retention issues, but the local authority says it is working to improve the crisis and developed and launched a school leadership strategy for Kent in October 2015 as part of a three-year plan.

The strategy, which sees the council working in partnership with the Kent Association of Headteachers, the dioceses and the Kent Governors' Association and the Kent and Medway Teaching Schools Network, is designed to "recognise the importance of strong and effective school leadership".

The report, which will be discussed by the committee on Thursday, adds: "One of the primary aims of the leadership strategy is to ensure that future leaders in Kent are identified and supported."

"To do this, it identifies training pathways, and support and guidance for leaders at all levels."

"The strategy also aims to ensure that current school leaders are valued and supported through inspirational leadership conferences and events, and the creation of a strong and supportive network of school leaders across Kent."

It is not just leaders that KCC is struggling to recruit, however, but also teachers at both primary and secondary level.

Last year it emerged that the council had been looking as far as Christchurch in New Zealand to fill vacancies and chiefs say they want to continue the council's recruitment drive in Oceania, while admitting it may only

be a temporary answer to the problem.

The report adds: "We believe that overseas recruitment is a short term solution for Kent schools and academies."

"However, to assist with the national shortage of teachers Kent-Teach [the council's education recruitment website] have looked beyond national recruitment strategies to ensure that children and young people of Kent have high quality teachers in their schools."

"Kent-Teach works in partnership with an education agency in Australia called Point 2 Point and have negotiated reduced fees for Kent schools."

"Following a successful recruitment week in October 2016, 12 teachers were appointed to Kent schools."

"Kent-Teach are currently arranging Skype interviews in October with the aim of placing 10-15 teachers to start in January 2018."

Meanwhile, the Local Government Association is warning that thousands of children face the prospect of missing out on a school place over the coming years.

Richard Watts, chair of the LGA's children and young people board, said: "As the LGA has previously warned, the school places squeeze is now about to hit secondary schools."

"More and more families will face growing uncertainty when trying to secure their child's secondary school without action."

"Councils have worked hard to help create almost 600,000 additional primary places since 2010. This is no small feat."

"However, as those children move on to secondary schools, the majority of which are now academies, securing new secondary places in the areas where they are needed is becoming increasingly difficult."

"Councils are working with one hand behind their backs to help as many pupils as possible receive a place at their first choice school."

"If we are to avoid this looming secondary school places crisis, councils need to be able to force existing academy schools to expand if voluntary agreement is impossible and must be given back powers to open new mainstream schools themselves."

A Department for Education spokesman said in response: "These figures are thoroughly misleading. Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there is a school place available for every child."

"We have allocated £5.8 billion of basic need funding between 2015 and 2020 to enable them to do this, and over 735,000 additional pupil places were created between 2010 and 2016."

"This money is given to councils based on their own estimates of the number of places they will need."

"We also know that a vast majority of parents are securing a place for their child at their first choice of secondary school - 83.5 per cent this year, with more than 94 per cent having received offers at one of their top three choices."

Kent County Council's cabinet member for children, young people and education, Roger Gough, was also unavailable for comment at the time of going to press.



OPENING: The Princess of Wales at the opening of the Tunbridge Wells shopping centre in 1992. A display of the day is currently on show at the venue.

Remembering majestic magic of Diana, 20 years after her death

Tom Pyman looks back at the Kent connections with a woman whose legacy continues to live on

THIS week marked the 20th anniversary of the sudden death of Diana, Princess of Wales - "the People's Princess" who spent her school-days in the county.

Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris on August 31, 1997, sparking a remarkable national period of mourning, previously unseen in this country.

And two decades on, the impact of her loss and life rose to the surface again with a host of tributes paid on the anniversary.

Thousands made the pilgrimage to the gates of Kensington Palace, where she lived with her sons William and Harry, to lay flowers, messages and pictures in her memory.

And the impact of her passing was felt right here in Kent too - a county in which the princess was said to have enjoyed some of the happiest days of her life; long before she was catapulted into the global spotlight when she started dating Prince Charles.

Diana spent a number of years of her childhood attending the independent West Heath Girls' School in Sevenoaks.

While she struggled academically, failing her O-levels twice, Diana's outstanding community spirit was recognised with an award from the school, before she left aged 16.

She visited the school again in 1987, arriving by helicopter, to open a new sports hall. During her visit she

recalled the punishments she used to get for breaking the rules, which included having to run round the lacrosse pitch or weed the garden.

But during the 1990s, pupils numbers started to decline and the school went into receivership on September 1, 1997, a day after Diana and her partner Dodi Al Fayed were killed across the Channel.

During that process, plaques commemorating events such as Diana's engagement, marriage and her sons' births, were sold.

Despite some initial interest from the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, it was a charity set up by the often controversial businessman Mohamed Al Fayed - father of Dodi - who spent around £2.5 million to acquire it. The Al Fayed Charitable Trust bought it on August 14 1998, with The New School at West Heath opening a month later, before bosses reverted back to the original name of West Heath School in 2015.

It now caters for many pupils with emotional and social communication difficulties.

In addition to her return to her former school, the princess was a frequent visitor to the county, and in 1983, two years after marrying Prince Charles, returned to open the Cranmer House residential home in Canterbury.

She had close ties with the city as it was there the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment - known as The Tigers - was based and she made frequent vis-



its there.

She was back in April 1989 for her cousin Edward Berry's wedding to Joanna Leschallas at Cranbrook Parish Church before attending projects in Tunbridge Wells, as a patron of the children's charity, Barnardo's.

Other visits including racing around the Buckmore Park track in Chatham with sons William and Harry - the pictures of which are still proudly displayed at the venue - and opening the Heart of Kent hospice in Aylesford.

One of her most trumpeted visits to the county, however, was when she officially opened Royal Victoria Place in Tunbridge Wells, 25 years ago.

The spa town's royal association continued on October 21, 1992 when Diana took centre stage before an enthusiastic crowd of more than 5,000 people to open what was then Kent's newest and biggest retail centre.

To mark the anniversary, shopping

centre bosses are remembering the princess and her visit with a special photographic display - launched last weekend and running all the way through until Sunday, October 29.

The display features photographs that tell the story of the princess' visit, showing her doing what she did best - spending time meeting the townsfolk and members of the local community.

The commemorative marble plaque which was unveiled by Diana is still proudly displayed at the heart of the centre a quarter of a century on and is the attention of all who visit.

When her death in 1997 was announced, the plaque became a focal point for the town's outpouring of grief with hundreds of floral tributes and messages being laid around it.

Marc Burchett, marketing manager at the centre, said: "Her visit meant so much to so many people who will always cherish the memories of the

moment they got to meet her.

"That's why we felt it was important to mark the 20th anniversary of her untimely death in this way."

Diana's sons, princes William and Harry have spoken candidly about their mother in the run-up to the anniversary this week, describing the anguish they experienced and the grief they still feel.

Harry, interviewed for an ITV documentary, said: "There's not a day that William and I don't wish that she was still around."

"And we wonder what kind of a mother she would be now, and what kind of a public role she would have, and what a difference she would be making."

William added: "I think she would have carried on, really getting stuck into various causes and making change."

"If you look at some of the issues she focused on, leprosy, Aids, landmines, she went for some tough areas. She would have carried on with that."

Diana was 36 when she died after being pursued by photographers in the streets of Paris.

She had married Prince Charles in 1981 in a wedding viewed by hundreds of millions around the world.

Their marriage ran into difficulties soon after and by 1992 it was confirmed the royal couple were separating. She remained hugely popular and a constant source of media attention right up to her death.

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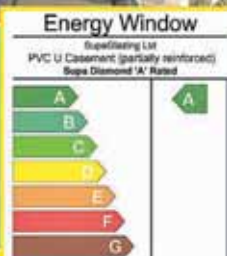


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‘We go to war because words and common sense fail us’

In a special article penned for Kent on Sunday ahead of the opening of the National Theatre's touring production of War Horse, the book's author talks about its remarkable impact and how his parents met and fell in love here in Kent

By Michael Morpurgo

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

ON September 15, War Horse begins an extensive UK tour, at the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury. And thereby hangs a tale or two.

My mother and father were acting in rep at The Marlowe in 1938. I believe it was where they fell in love and decided to get married. They were young, and no doubt full of hope for the future.

The Second World War was to blight their lives and their marriage. I grew up in a family scarred by war. This was, I am sure, why I came to write War Horse all those years ago, why peace and war have been at the heart of so many stories I have written before and since.

My mother was the first to give me my love of stories. She read to me every night - Rudyard Kipling's Just So Stories was her favourite and mine. She read them with a passion, bringing the characters to life, playing with the language as she read. She acted out those stories to me, made bedtime a joy. I cannot read The Just So Stories without hearing her voice in my head.

Whatever we become or whatever we achieve in this life, we only do it with the help and inspiration of others, our benefactors. My mother gave me my love of stories, a teacher or two at my school - also in Canterbury by the way, the same school where Kit Marlowe went a few years before me.

Then there was my friend Ted Hughes who kept me writing when things were not going well; and I owe much to my own children and the children I taught in school, who became my first readers and listeners. And my wife Clare is always my first reader and editor, and who always thought War Horse was my best book. She was right, it seems.

She must be, because Joey has trotted on all these years, in one guise or another, as a book, a play, in concert form, as a film. Now when I write another book, I am 'the author of War Horse'. That I owe to the play, to the National Theatre, and to yet another of my benefactors, Tom Morris who had the crazy notion of adapting the book to the stage in the first place - more of him later.

During an eight year run in London, this now iconic National Theatre play toured in

the UK, in the US, in Europe, in Australia, Japan and China, and played to over seven million people worldwide. This tour marks the 10th anniversary of the play, which opened at the National Theatre on October 9, 2007.

On September 5, 2013, Joey the War Horse, came back to where he was born, in the tiny village of Iddesleigh in deepest Devonshire. The town band played for him, the bunting was out, the flags were flying and 200 children were there along with most of the people of the parish and from all over Devon to welcome him home.

Joey loved every minute of it, tossing his head, rearing up and neighing, relishing the adoration. But I could see he was longing to break free to gallop over the fields where he grew up as a foal way back, before he was trained as a farm horse, before he was sold away to the army in 1914 as a cavalry horse, a War Horse.





PRODUCTION: Canterbury will host the 10th anniversary of War Horse which author Michael Morpurgo, pictured bottom left, has proved an enormous success around the world and been described as the "greatest anthem to peace ever performed". It arrives at the Marlowe Theatre next month.

The story of War Horse was first conceived in front of the log fire in the The Duke of York pub in Iddesleigh in the winter of 1980, after (or

was it during?) a conversation with an old soldier from the First World War, Wilf Ellis, who first told me how it was to find himself as a

young man in the trenches of Flanders.

He spoke as if he was seeing it all again in his mind's eye, as if he recalled the faces of friend

and foe alike, the camaraderie, and the pity.

I had read the great war poets, seen All Quiet

Continued on page 16



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Continued on page 16

on the Western Front, Oh! What a Lovely War. But here was someone who had been there. Other old men in the village, Captain Budgett, a cavalryman, and Albert Weeks, told me more. The more I heard, the more I felt that any story I might want to write about this war had to be written not from a British perspective, not even from a French or German or Belgian one. It had to be the story of the suffering and grieving on all sides, military and civilian too. I needed to tell a story that reflected the universal pity of war.

In 1982, when it was published, the book was liked well enough by those who read it, but sadly, not many did read it, and all too few bought it. Reviews were 'mixed'. The publishers, Egmont, bless their hearts, kept it in print; and in France, Cheval de Guerre has never been out of print with Gallimard. The book was out to pasture on my backlist.

Then one morning, some 25 years later Tom Morris, an associate director from the National Theatre rings me up saying he'd like to make a play of War Horse, with puppets! Absurd, I thought, but it's the National Theatre, for goodness sake. Maybe they know what they're doing. Then they showed me the work of Hand-spring Puppet Company. I heard the music of John Tams and Adrian Sutton, saw the set design of Rae Smith, read the scripts, saw the rehearsals. Yes, they did know what they were doing.

The play garnered awards by the dozen – unlike the book! And it's now going on a tour to so many places from which young men left all those years ago to go to war, so many of them never to return. Their descendants will see a play that has been called 'the greatest anthem to peace' ever performed.

It has been wonderful enough for all this to happen, but for the play to go to Berlin was truly momentous, and timely too.

It was 2014, a hundred years since German



IMPRESSIVE: The play with its remarkable staging has won a host of major awards

soldiers marched away to fight in France and Belgium, since British soldiers went across the Channel to confront them, 100 years after the beginning of arguably the most terrible of all wars, 'the war to end all wars', in which over 10 million soldiers on all sides perished, and 10 million horses too. A British play about the First World War was performed in Berlin by German actors, a play which is above all about our universal longing for peace and reconciliation. It played in England and Germany at the same time.

I have lived all my life in a post-war world, post both world wars, though many consider them to be in effect one war with a 20-year interruption. My childhood was lived amongst the ruins of bombed-out London. As I grew up I heard stories of pride, of heroism and cruelty, of grief and loss. I played war games in amongst

the ruins, shot Germans by the hundred, until I began to realise that in war there is suffering and loss on both sides, that anger lives on through grief, and that it is anger that leads so often to the next war.

I learned also that it is rare for war to solve anything, and that we go to war because words and common sense and human kindness and mutual respect have failed us. In Europe, we have at long last, I hope, learned this, and at a terrible cost. Now we argue about currency, and sausages, and agriculture, and fishing and football. The frontiers have gone. Our children and our grandchildren are hardly aware they are there. The bitterness and the anger has passed and we try to find common cause whenever we can, and when we can't, we agree to disagree.

I go often to Ypres to research my stories, and

whenever I do I make a point of visiting the war cemeteries. I am struck always how many British people are there, Australians too, and Canadians, and New Zealanders, but how very few Germans are there. Yet their fathers and sons, their brothers and uncles, who left their homes a hundred years ago died in even greater numbers than ours. Their boys went to war for much the same reasons ours did, patriotism, pride, for adventure, because they were told to. Their deaths were as terrible, the sense of loss at home just as grievous. Yet it would seem that even now, the shadow of the Hitler war does not allow them to remember, as we do, those who died in the First World War.

The last of the old soldiers, theirs and ours, of the First World War, are now all gone. There are fewer every year who knew and loved them. The hurt and anger, the grieving and the guilt is passing. In their place is a growing respect between the nations, and a determination to forge reconciliation and understanding. If the play of War Horse, and the book and the film too, can play a small part in this new beginning, then I shall be a happy man.

Siegfried Sassoon wrote in November 1918:

Reconciliation

When you are standing at your hero's grave
Or near some homeless village where he died
Remember, through your heart's rekindling
pride

The German soldiers who were loyal and brave.

Men fought like brutes, and hideous things were done

And you have nourished hatred, harsh and blind.

But in that Golgotha perhaps you'll find

The mothers of the men who killed your son.

When we played in Berlin we called War Horse 'Gefährten' which means 'comrades'. We are all comrades now. About time.

■ Turn to page 33 for more on the War Horse and its upcoming string of shows at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre.

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Tram tragedy which killed 11, remembered

A special service was held to mark the centenary of the River tram crash this week, an horrific incident during war time which left 11 dead and 60 people injured. **Chris Murphy** looks back

IT HAS been 100 years since a tram accident left 11 people dead and 60 injured after an overcrowded tram overturned near Dover.

And this week the anniversary was marked with a special memorial service in the town.

During it, the family of the driver of the tram, Albert Bissenden, laid flowers to remember those who lost their lives.

Local historian Lorraine Sencicle told us: "Dover is a treasure-trove of history, locally, nationally and internationally.

"For over 20 years I have written many books and stories on the subject.

"Out of this treasure-trove some stories stand out and the Crabble tram accident is one.

"It happened in the afternoon of Sunday, August 19, 1917 when a grossly overcrowded, roofless, double-decker tram overturned at the bottom of the chicane of Crabble Road, River, hitting the north parapet of the bridge that crosses the River Dour. It was, nationally, the worst tram accident on record with 11 dead and 60 injured, many of them seriously.

"The accident was waiting to happen according to the Board of Trade inquiry. However, because it was during the First World War, with heavier casualties being reported from the Western Front, the details of the accident were not reported in detail.

"The consequence is that since that time there have been numerous articles and media documentaries, most of which are factually incorrect and fail to appreciate where the blame really lays. As an academic researcher and local historian, it became a mission to find out the truth, which confirmed the results of the Board of Trade inquiry and to tell the true story for posterity."

An exhibition was recently held at Crabble Corn Mill about the disaster.

It was particularly poignant was the attendance of nine members of the Bissenden family coming from all over England for the event and included Albert Bissenden's grandsons David and Alan.

Following the exhibition presentation they went to the scene of the tragedy where beneath the Dover Society plaque a short but moving speech given by David Bissenden. The two brothers then laid a bouquet in memory of those killed and injured that day 100 years ago.

Electricity first appeared in Dover in 1894 and at a cost of £28,000 the first tramway

opened on September 6, 1897 - it was a double-decker with open top.

Later, at Crabble, the Board of Trade demanded some slight changes to plans because of steep hills and a sharp curve. It was thought these small modifications were enough to make the line safe, but they fell short.

Ms Sencicle said the route was passed on September 28, 1905, by Colonel Sir John Wallace Pringle, chief inspecting officer of the Railways Inspectorate of the Ministry of Transport.

The Dover and River Light Railway Order 1903 was granted on October 12 that year.

Crabble Road is steep, one in ten with a 135 degree bend before the track passed under the low bridge before another sharp turn. Another Board of Trade inspection recommended the curves should be increased in radius and the gradient modified.

This was not done, possibly due to the £21,000 cost, she said.

With the start of the Great War, many experienced tram drivers went to fight with novices taking over.

The driver of the No 20 tram on the fateful afternoon was one such recruit, Albert James Bissenden, who had been discharged from the army in February following a nervous breakdown.

Having never driven a tram before, the accident happened just five weeks after he started.

On the day, the tram was overcrowded and some passengers were being left at stops. There were seats for 48 but at least 70 were aboard.

Ms Sencicle said: "On reaching the brow of Crabble Hill, before traversing Crabble Road, it was usual for drivers to stop and turn the control key to the off position in order to cut the power supply. This automatically slowed the trams down and because the main brakes were rheostatic - electrical braking using a load resistance - they could only be applied if the power was cut off.

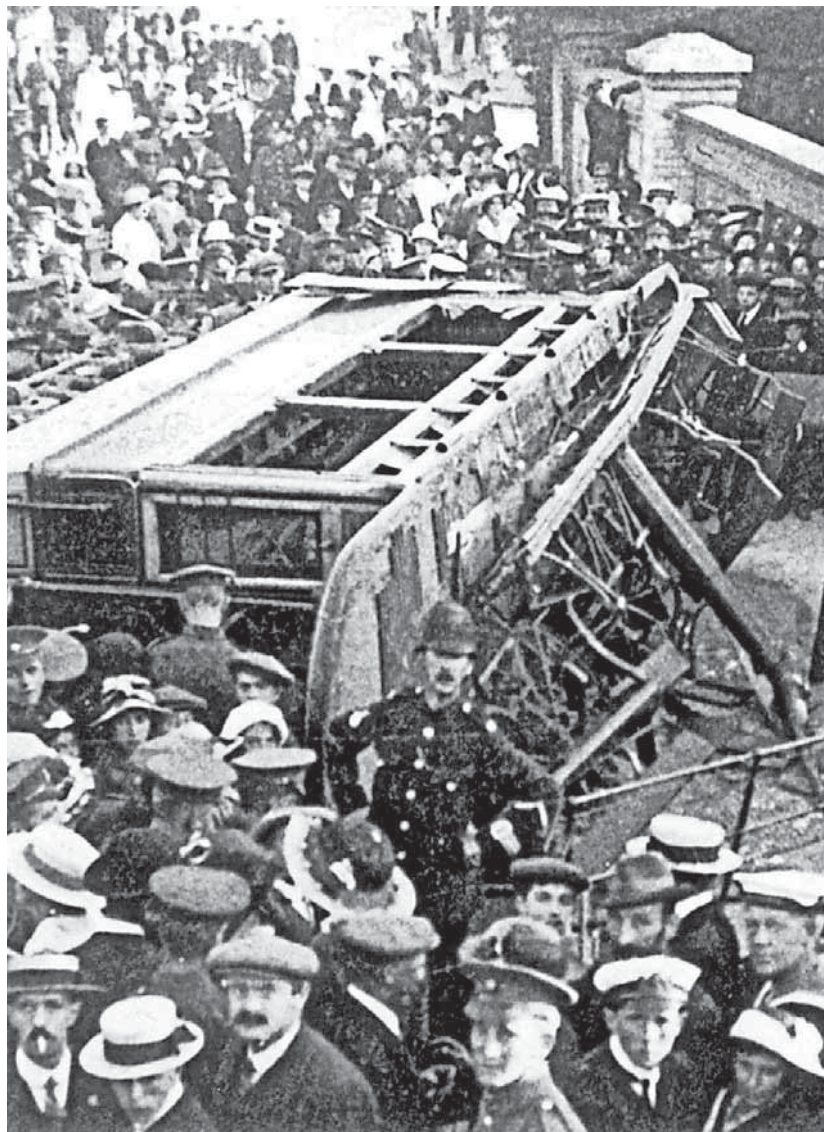
"For whatever reason that Sunday, on that run, Bissenden did not stop and turn off the control key. This meant that the tram was on full power from the top of the incline."

Several braking systems failed to slow the tram as it was still under power and the crash became inevitable at the sharp turn.

Before the tram hit the Dour bridge wall, Bissenden had jumped free.

Ms Sencicle said: "The tram overturned at the bottom of the second bend on Crabble Road and the upper deck smashed into the wall. Eleven people were killed and 51 civilians plus

East



nine military personnel were injured."

Police, locals and even passengers from a passing train that stopped, all helped with the tragedy, administering first aid the best they could.

The most severely injured were taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital in the High Street on a commandeered tram. Two died on the way.

The military personnel were later taken to the Military Hospital on Western Heights.

Six passengers died instantly with the Market Hall being used as a mortuary. A soldier died the next day at his Belgravia home from the fractured skull he sustained.

Trooper Gunner had tried to slow the tram with his feet grinding against the road surface. He failed, but also lost both feet and was later awarded the Albert Medal.

An inquest jury later decided: "We find that the accident was caused by an error of judgement on the part of the driver, who, we consider, was too inexperienced."

The official verdict was that "the deaths were caused by the tram-car running away and overturning, and that the accident was caused through by the error of judgement and inexperience of the driver of the car, and that the deceased's met their deaths through misadventure."

Once more, improvements were ordered, but a lack of cash meant they didn't happen.

In 1923, another tram, with just a handful of riders, ran down the hill out of control thanks to a mechanical failure. One passenger jumped and was seriously hurt, but the tram didn't crash this time.

In 1937, buses finally replaced the tramline.

Dover's last tram was driven by Bissenden, who later trained as a carpenter, moved to Dagenham and died in 1953.

FAULT: The blame was placed on the young and inexperienced driver - members of his family visited the town to remember him and the victims this week



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Triennial's magic to pull in crowds for town's evolution

Hugely anticipated, and a real boost to the economy, Folkestone gets arty again

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

THOUSANDS are set to descend on Folkestone over the next two months as the seaside town's much-anticipated Triennial kicks off this weekend.

Held every three years, it is described as the flagship project of the Creative Foundation, an independent visionary arts charity which works to help regenerate the area through creative activity.

Running all the way through until November 5, it invites artists to engage with Folkestone's rich cultural history and built environment, and to exhibit newly-commissioned work in public spaces around the town.

Around 20 major artworks are commissioned for each Triennial, with eight or 10 remaining in place permanently.

Among the artists involved is Antony Gormley, whose Another Time series includes two sculptures by the Folkestone sea, as well as one near

the Turner Contemporary gallery in Margate.

The cast-iron figures "celebrate the still and silent nature of sculpture... within the flow of lived time" and will be completely submerged by water at high tide.

Richard Woods' Holiday Home has already got people talking in recent days after his creations appeared in the town.

The piece consists of six one-third size 'homes' identical except in their colours and sited in 'unlikely' places.

They are said to draw attention to the housing crisis and satirically suggests that no site is too small, too unlikely, or too inconvenient for its neighbours, for a second home.

Also featuring is Halfway to Heaven, an audio installation by composer Emily Peasgood who has researched the history of the Baptist burial ground, and Marc Schmitz and Dolgor Ser-Od's Siren, which amplifies distant sound, but also 'speaks back' by becoming a megaphone - gathering the noise of the waves like a sea shell and recalling the Harbour Arm lighthouse fog horn.



HOUSING: Richard Woods' Holiday Home consists of small houses

Lewis Biggs, curator of Folkestone Triennial, said: "We are delighted to be bringing 20 new site-specific works to Folkestone as part of the 2017 Triennial - titled Double Edge.

"It has been a pleasure to work with such an inspiring group of artists, all of whom have created thought-provoking work that is rooted in the history and fabric of the town but explores universal issues.

"We hope that the artworks will excite and engage a wide variety of audiences over the next nine weeks and in some cases for many years to come."



BEACH: The Jelly Mould Pavilion



STATUE: Antony Gormley's cast iron figures are part of a wider work spreading across the UK

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PLACES: Keep an eye out for some work in some very unusual places - such as up this lamppost



TIDES: Gormley's figures are submerged at high tide and then only revealed again when the water withdraws



FASCINATING: Halfway to Heaven consists of audio boxes discussing those who lived and died in the town



LOOK: All pieces are commissioned by the Creative Foundation for Folkestone Triennial 2017. All images by Thierry Bal



BIG: Marc Schmitz and Dolgor Ser-Od's Siren will be a popular attraction



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Look who came back to visit scenes of his TV triumphs

Only Fools and Horses' trip to Margate remains one of the best-loved episodes, while Darling Buds of May remains perfect for many. Now David Jason returns

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

HE is one of our best loved actors, with a career which has spanned half a century. And in a special programme looking back at his remarkable life, Sir David Jason has revisited parts of Kent where he filmed some of his most memorable scenes.

Best known as wheeler-dealer Derek 'Del Boy' Trotter in the long-running comedy Only Fools and Horses, he also enjoyed huge success in the TV adaptation of Kentish classic, HE Bates' the Darling Buds of May. And both series featured the county, prompting the star, now 77, to make a return for a series of shows for David Jason: My Life On Screen for the channel Gold.

On December 25 1989, the Jolly Boys' Outing Christmas special of Only Fools hit the screens which saw Del and his mates from the Nag's Head take a coach trip beano to Margate.

Memorable for its string of classic

scenes - including the stop-off at what was once the Roman Galley pub on the Thanet Way near Reculver where the coach driver has one too many drinks and the cast's fun and frolics both at Dreamland, then known as Bembom Brothers, and on the main sands - there was also filming at Dumpton Market, the police station at Broadstairs, homes at Cliftonville and the old aquarium in Cliftonville where the coach exploded.

On a visit back to Margate, by coach, Sir David said: "Del Boy Trotter would become the defining role in my career. It would make me a household name and pick up some big awards.

"This was one of my happiest times of my whole career - working with a close-knit cast and crew who became like a second family to me.

"And if one episode summed up that wonderful team spirit, it was the 1989 Christmas special."

He made the trip with the director and actor John Challis who played used car dealer Boycie.

Added Sir David: "What a special time this was in all our careers.

"Our trip to Margate was typical of

a Fools and Horses shoot. We had as much fun off-screen as on it."

Filmed back in February of this year, the stars of the show posed outside the Only Fools and Horses graffiti hoarding outside Dreamland which remembers the famous episode.

Sir David said: "It's nice to see we have not been forgotten. We've made it - we are on the hoarding of Margate."

On the show's shaky start with the ratings, the trio recalled it was a technicians' strike at the time that made the BBC put it on again as a repeat, and this time, viewing figures shot up by two million as word of mouth about the strange new comedy spread in a time long before the internet and social media.

It went on to enjoy a booming future with the original half-hour episodes expanding in size to 50 minutes and the characters becoming far more in-depth as a result - endearing them further to the viewing public.

By the time of the Jolly Boys' Outing, more than 20 million watched the show, and the episode which saw the Trotters finally become million-

aires pulled in a remarkable 24.3 million viewers.

Explains Sir David: "There were millions of wannabe entrepreneurs all with plans to get rich quick. Del Boy just seemed to capture the moment.

"After two decades on television, it brought me a level of fame and recognition way beyond anything I have ever expected.

"I knew this was different - it had real people with real lives. People could relate it to their own lives."

In 1991, Sir David took on the role of Pop Larkin in The Darling Buds of May, a Sunday evening comedy drama on ITV. Filmed in and around Pluckley, near Ashford, it ran for two years and 20 episodes and was another huge success.

Speaking about his time on the show, Sir David said: "On ITV I took on a very different character, but one the British public would take to their hearts

"The Kent countryside provided the idyllic setting for this exciting new adventure.

"It is still a beautiful part of Eng-



land, it really is.

"Among our wonderful cast was a then unknown Catherine Zeta Jones.

"The series provided viewers with a perfect escape from modern life bringing families together on a Sunday night in front of the telly."

Visiting once again the farm used in filming, the actor realised it was now being used for something completely different, and proudly took



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POP: Sir David Jason outside the farm in Pluckley used for the filming of the *Darling Buds of May* in the early 1990s, and, right, with co-stars Buster Merryfield and Nicholas Lyndhurst in Margate for 1989's classic *Jolly Boys' Outing* in *Only Fools and Horses*.

some credit in that happening.

He said: "When we filmed here, it was a real life working farm. It looks like it has been converted in to holiday homes. I suspect we might have had something to do with that."

"It has changed very dramatically.

When we were working here with all the props and everything, it was really scruffy, but then of course it was meant to be scruffy because that was how the Larkins lived.

"In fact the only thing that wasn't scruffy about the Larkins was their

car and that old Roller still looks in great condition."

Before taking Ma Larkin's actress Pam Ferris for one last ride in the bright yellow Rolls Royce on the documentary, Sir David said: "It is a wonderful piece of kit – still here and still



working."

Pam Ferris, who has since enjoyed a hugely successful career herself including roles in a Harry Potter movie, *Luther*, *Call the Midwife* and *Rosemary and Thyme*, lives in Eltham, close to Dover.

Sir David added: "Darling Buds was a fantastic time in my life, but after three series, I was ready for a new challenge. It had brought a colourful slice of escapism to Britain."

TV channel Gold, which is also currently airing a series of documentaries looking at the success of *Only Fools and Horses*, broadcast the Sir David documentary for the first time

last weekend.

The actor said: "As my life on screen has now gathered variety and quantity, I am hoping that I can offer a documentary which gives the audience an accurate range of my work. Fingers crossed, it should make for an enjoyable programme to reflect the enjoyment I've had in making each and every show."

It also looks at his voiceover work for children's hits such as *Dangermouse* and *The Wind in the Willows* as well as his many other starring roles in the likes of *Open All Hours*, *Porterhouse Blue*, *Do Not Adjust Your Set* and *Porterhouse Blue*.

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FILLING, sanding, cleaning - it might be boring work, but thorough prep is essential for a fabulous finish when it comes to painting woodwork.

One of the basic rules of DIY is prep, prep and more prep - thorough preparation is vital to get a good finish. It's often boring, hard work and time consuming, especially with woodwork, but worth it.

Before you paint, prep typically involves filling, sanding and cleaning off, and sometimes repeating the process until the surface is in tip-top condition. It's often easier to see what needs to be filled after applying a coat of paint, so it's not always possible to do all the prep in one go. For walls and ceilings, different fillers are needed for different jobs. Other times, you'll need a heavy filler with body that can be used on different surfaces - indoor plaster, stone, concrete and wood - up to 20mm deep.

Priming is also key to getting a good, long-lasting finish.

Applying a primer or primer/undercoat ensures your topcoat will adhere to the surface better. For example, shiny surfaces usually have to be sanded, cleaned off and painted with a suitable primer to make the surface matt.

Priming can also seal surfaces and make them less porous; new plaster is really absorbent, so always seal it before painting, wallpapering or tiling it.

Another reason to prime is to provide better coverage. If you're painting over a dark emulsion with a pale one, it pays to use a basecoat emulsion first. Getting solid colour with white water-based wood paints is a problem because they don't generally cover well, but a good primer will.

You won't get a good finish without using decent paint rollers and brushes. There's nothing worse than ones that shed fibres and bristles, or leave lots of roller and brush marks, and for this reason, cheap rollers and brushes can be a false economy.



Worklights can also help achieve a good finish, especially now it's getting dark earlier.

While you should ideally prep and decorate in good natural light, worklights are fantastic for illuminating a room when it's gloomy, and because

they're on a tripod, they're fully adjustable, so you can get light where you need it. The downside? Worklights can show up things you can't see in natural or normal artificial light, resulting in unnecessary prep; angling the light away



from what you're working on works best.

The best way to get a good finish with wooden or laminate flooring is to remove skirting boards and replace them (or fit new ones), so they cover the expansion gap around the edge of the flooring. If this isn't practical, fit matching wooden scotia beading over the expansion gap. The easiest way to fix it is with a nail gun, which is much quicker and easier than hammering in panel pins.

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Plant now to reap benefits when spring finally dawns

SUMMER may be coming to a close, but there's little time to put your feet up as it's almost time to begin planting your spring bulbs.

Christine Skelmersdale, managing director of Broadleigh Gardens, which specialises in smaller bulbs, offers the following advice.

Watch your planting depth: "Traditionally people were told to plant bulbs twice as deep as the height of the bulb itself, but that is rubbish. Bulbs should be planted 4-6 inches deep. Put them into a sensible, deep hole away from the vagaries of heat and cold and wet and dry."

Check your soil: "Make sure the soil's not waterlogged. If you plant tulips in light soil, they should go deeper than the conventional depth. I have to plant mine the week before Christmas because I am so busy, but it doesn't make any difference. They'll still bloom at the same time in spring."

Care for your containers: "Don't use multi-purpose compost, which has the consistency of peat, when planting bulbs in pots. Use a large pot and fill it with loam-based compost, as multi-pur-

pose tends to dry out. Ensure the pot has good drainage so the bulbs don't rot.

Try some new varieties: Christine recommends a tiny daffodil, called 'Snowy Baby'. It's a pale milky colour with a tiny dwarf trumpet and grows to around six inches high. Plant it in the front of a border or in a raised bed or rock garden. Plant in autumn and it will flower in March.

Multiflora are a new breed of long-lasting tulip with up to six heads per stem, growing to around 16 inches and flowering in April. Some change colour dramatically as they age.

Chameleon tulips, which change colour over time, are particularly unusual. Try varieties such as 'Antoinette', which opens soft yellow before the petals become edged with an orange tinge which gradually deepens and spreads over most of the petal.

Other new bulbs include Ranunculus 'Mirabelle Vert Mix', a striking double variety in a range of vivid colours with emerald green centres and Anemone 'Mistral Tigre', a stunning deep pink and green tinged anemone with shades of white and a deep purple middle, flowering from March to May.



PLANNING: Time well spent now will deliver results but follow the guide here to ensure your bulbs have the best chance of blooming early next year.



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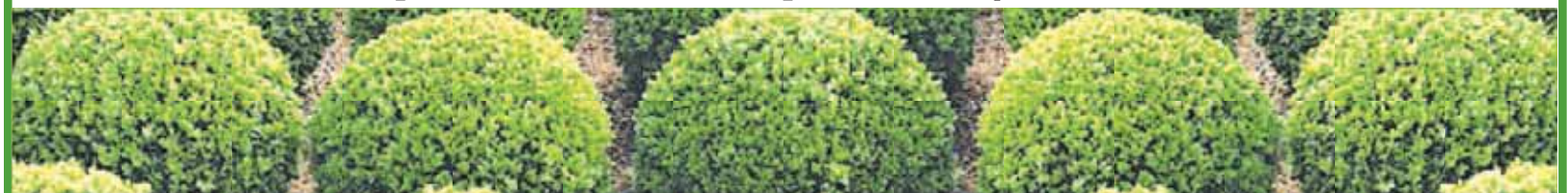
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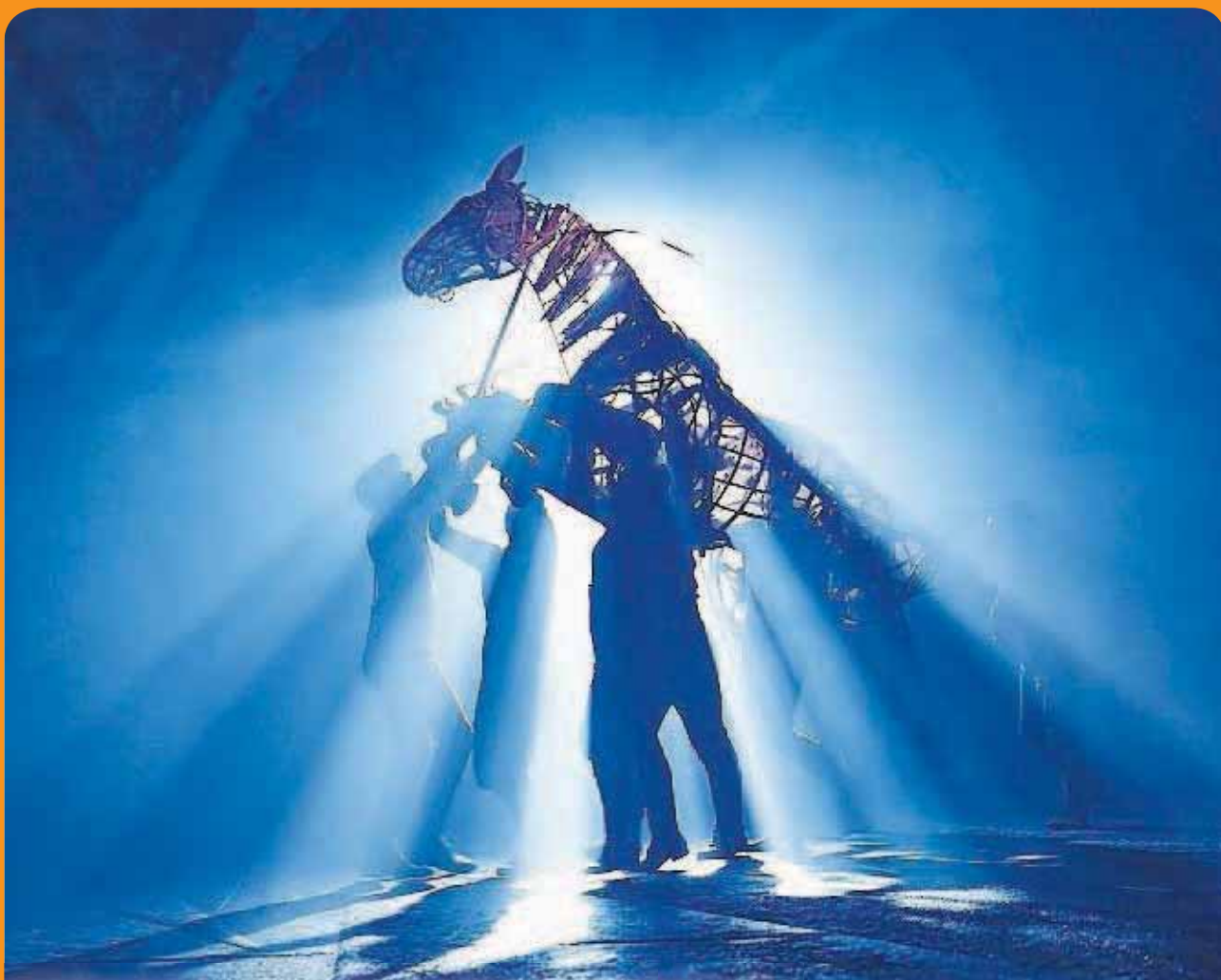
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HIT: The production has proved a huge success around the world with a host of major awards

It's out of the starting gate, War Horse all ready for run

The National Theatre's production starts anniversary tour at Marlowe Theatre

IT has already set a box office record for Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre and the excitement for the opening stint of the National Theatre's hugely acclaimed production of War Horse is now reaching fever pitch.

The production team this week started setting up in the auditorium for three weeks of rehearsals ahead of the show's one month run at the venue.

When tickets for the stage version of former Kent school teacher Michael Morpurgo's book - which runs from September 15 to October 14 - went on sale back in January, a staggering 2,500 were snapped up in one day alone.

And the box office clout of the show should not be under-estimated.

Based on Morpurgo's book, War Horse is a remarkable story of courage, loyalty, and friendship

about a young boy called Albert and his horse Joey. Set against the backdrop of the First World War, and featuring ground-breaking puppetry work by South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company, it is the most successful play in the National Theatre's history.

War Horse received its world premiere on October 9, 2007 at the National Theatre, London, where it played for two seasons before opening at the New London Theatre in March 2009. Since then, it has been seen by more than seven million people worldwide (including a Chinese language production), and won 25 awards, including the Tony Award for Best Play on Broadway.

All of which means it is an additional honour for the Canterbury theatre to be hosting the show for its tenth anniversary tour.

Theatre director Mark Everett, who oversaw the theatre's multi-million pound rebuild which allowed it to be able to stage such lavish productions, says the excitement is palpable, adding it was a "great honour" to be chosen to launch the tour.

He explained: "There's an excited buzz around the theatre now the National have finally arrived. And as it's such a big production, there's a lot of people and activity as well."

There are still some tickets available for some nights of the show's remarkable run - but be quick they are far and few between.

As Morpurgo explains in a special article penned for Kent on Sunday this weekend (see pages 14-16), the Canterbury venue holds a special place in his heart.

"My mother and father were acting in rep at The Marlowe in

1938. I believe it was where they fell in love and decided to get married."

Certainly War Horse has proved a slowburner of a success story.

"War Horse was my sixth book, published in 1982," the author explains. "It sold about 2,000 copies a year. That was the maximum. The book was discovered 21 years later, by accident. I was on Desert Island Discs on Radio 4 in 2003 and one of the listeners was the mother of the artistic director at the National Theatre. Two years later the play comes out, and it is a huge hit. Then the film. Now the book has sold over one million copies."

If you're lucky enough to have a ticket already, be prepared for a treat. Limited numbers are still available at marlowetheatre.com, or call 01227 787787.

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CHLOE, very attractive girl, 32yrs, long hair and lovely teeth. I like to take care of myself. I want a man who will pamper me. In return you won't be disappointed as I am super sexy. Text Only. Box: 4070336

ANGELA, attractive 66yr old free minded and spirited lady. Genuine with varied interests seeks gent 65+. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428485

HEATHER, 54yrs, slim brunette with petite figure, loves keep fit. Seeks chap for nights out, fun times, must be honest and kind. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428491

STEPHANIE, super sexy black mamba, 55yrs, young with curves in all the right places. Call me and you won't be sorry, we can have the time of our lives. Text Only. Box: 4060220

VICTORIA, 46yrs, bubbly outgoing nurse, petite pretty brunette. WLTN N/S man, any age, must have GSOH and be kind. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428489

CANDIDA, 52yrs, married lady, very well educated with good looks and dress sense. Unappreciated by older husband and hoping for some fun with discreet chap. Text Only. Box: 4010002

TERESA, friendly lady with GSOH, curvy build and attractive looks, 50 something, seeking romantic male 45-55. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428383

JANET, late 40's divorcee, own home and car looking to spice up my life with some fun. Discreet men only please, I'm not ready for a full on relationship, casual chats. Text Only. Box: 4189331

ARE you a gent with GSOH 60-70 and looking for some fun then call me, Leah, I'm 57yrs, slim, attractive and looking for fun. ACA. Or text me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428381

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673

PIPPA, recently divorced lady, 46yrs, hoping to get back into dating and have some fun with a guy any age. Must be a laugh and willing to have a go at most things. Text Only. Box: 4101590

ANNETTA, 40yrs old seeks caring older gent 55+, you must be nice and enjoy my company. ACA/text answered. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428483

FELICITY, "my friends call me posh" I'm not really. Call me to see, I'm 58yrs, curvy, blonde extensions and very good for my age. ACA. Text Only. Box: 4043583

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel No: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399

LINDA, 48yrs, young looking blonde lady, slim and attractive. Hoping to meet new men friends, call and let's see what happens. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428377

JANE, 52yrs genuine blue eyed blonde lady WLTN romantic gent for potential relationship. ACA/text answered so please reply. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428379

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SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. Tel: 0906 515 3034 Box 425979

JOY, mid 50s independent lady, brunette, loves dining out, seeking gent of any age. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428373

HARRIET, 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box 426205

ATTRACTIVE widow, loves life, 60s music, walking and fun. Hoping to meet a similar minded gent 60-80 for life's adventures. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428371

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. Tel: 0906 515 3042 Box 426851

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715

TAMIKIA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 422365

MARGARET, attractive blonde widow, living alone and hoping to find a nice gentleman soulmate. I have lots to offer so please call or text me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428375

WANTED, submissive gent by attractive lady 51yrs, please call if you want to know more. Ata Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428367

ATTRACTIVE lady 61yrs young. Looking for friendship, maybe more with genuine gent. I'm feminine and curvy. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428157

CHRISTINE, 60 something lady, blue eyed blonde. Sincere, solvent and kind. Call me if you are interested in meeting up. Looks unimportant. Must be N/S. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428155

NICOLA, 37yrs mixed race beauty, just moved to the area from London so a bit lonely. Looks unimportant must have GSOH and be kind. ACA/text answered Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428369

CAROLINE, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady, looking for no strings midweek liaisons. Tel: 0906 515 3026 Box 427533

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

GENUINE retired, mature widower, honest, kind and considerate, enjoys most things, walking, countryside, seaside, seeking a lady for LTR, just wanting to share my life with somebody special. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428023

SOLVENT male, older but young at heart, looking for a young lady to wine and dine and spoil and pamper and in turn to pamper me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427443

MALE, 55, WLTN a lady, 60-70, for discreet adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428039

SMART Thanet male, 70, dark hair, brown eyes, 5ft5, OHOC, likes travel, countryside, the sea, walking, looking for an attractive local lady, for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428303

ATTRACTIVE male, dark hair, brown eyes, 5ft5, solvent, own bungalow and car, likes travel, countryside, seaside, walking, looking for attractive local lady for LTR. Thanet. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428127

JAMES, 43, genuine, witty, positive, kind and caring, loves travel, socialising, eating out and lots and lots of laughs with the right person, looking for genuine, friendly lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428019

MALE 60, 6ft, blue eyes, broad shoulders, size 11 shoes, a real handfull Seeks a fit mature busty woman for fun times. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6001755

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TAMARA, 44yrs, beautiful Indian lady seeks a Muslim gent 40+ Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428147

IF you are interested in meeting an attractive black lady then please call me. I'm Nikki, 57yrs, attractive, interested and kind. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428145

SLIM attractive lady, 59yrs, feminine, kind, loves life. Call me or text me your number and let's meet up. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428143

CAROL, attractive lady 55yrs young, slim, tanned, brunette. If you are genuine and looking to date then call or text me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428153

GENUINE caring lady 65yrs, varied interests, solvent, loves life, feminine, WLTN gent of any age for life's pleasures. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428151

RACHAEL, 50yrs, blue-eyed attractive lady, loves films, music and home life. WLTN gent 50-70yrs. ACA or text. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428149

LIVELY mature gent, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yr. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621

CARING, sociable male, 72, N/S, likes all types of music, walking, meals out, looking for a lady for friendship at first. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426885

KENT man, retired engineer, solvent, enjoys holidays, meals out, good conversation, WLTN a slim lady, 60-70, with a GSOH, to share these times and hopefully become friends. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426887

THANET male, retired, 5ft5, dark hair, smart, OHOC, likes walks, travel in motorhome, looking for a single, attractive lady with similar interests in Thanet. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427557

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021

MALE, 58, slim build, 5ft9, brown eyes, hard working, enjoys fishing and socialising, looking for no strings attached fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427173

HI ladies, looking for either NSA fun or LTR. I am single/work/live in own house. Text only. Mailbox: 4509325

SINGLE dad of two, WLTN a single mum, for a proper relationship. Please get in contact I look forward to hearing from you. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427999

WELL off man, wanting a young lady for spoiling. I am a sugar daddy looking for a sugar baby. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427441

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MALE, 55, looking for no strings attached friendship, with a lady 60-70, any status. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426133

CARING, sociable, GSOH, slim, attractive, married gent, 67, feels discarded and lonely, seeks likeminded lady 60+ for trips out, dining etc. Text only. Mailbox: 5082918

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587

LOCAL 70 year old young male, now single, nice appearance and dresser, looking for fun and friendship with a lady, 55-70, possible holidays. Can travel. Please ring. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426897

RETIRED, smart, 68 year old, 5ft5, I enjoy eating out, walking, holidays and golf, WLTN a slim, attractive lady, 60-68, for a loving, tender relationship, to enjoy these times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421853

MALE divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421717

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015

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MALCOLM, 60 something, gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and kind WLTN sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425333

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GAY guy, medium build, likes outdoors, D/IY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267

EASY going guy, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413

ROBBIE, 54, reasonably fit, bi-curious, I'm very inexperienced and would like to meet a CD or TV preferably but not essential for a bit of fun. Kent area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421357

MALE, 50s, likes to cross dress, looking for

Big names shine in celebration of the delights of written word

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

BOOK lovers will be flocking to the Sevenoaks Literary Festival later this month, with a host of big names confirmed for the line-up.

Among them will be the man many felt had the potential to be a future prime minister, but has now become a politician admired from both sides of the political divide.

Former home secretary and award-winning author Alan Johnson will open the event on September 22 as he chats to Philip Webster, the former political editor of The Times newspaper. They will discuss the three volumes of memoirs he has published and his time on the Labour's government's front bench and just why he didn't challenge to be leader of the party he has remained so loyal to.

Other highlights include Mick Herron, author of the Jackson Lamb series in conversation with crime fiction editor of The Telegraph, Jake Kerridge.

And closing the festival on October 7 are Laura Barnett, bestselling author of The Versions Us, and



STAR: Former home secretary Alan Johnson during his political hey day

Mercury Prize nominated singer Kathryn Williams. Together they collaborated on the lyrics featured in Laura's new novel Greatest Hits, with Kathryn writing original songs - some of which she will be performing on the night.

In addition, there will be topics covered such as the Russian Revolution, calligraphy, Jane Austen and an appearance by the town's long-standing celebrity, Gloria

Hunniford.

A spokesman for the event explained: "Our festival began in 2002 with a modest list of events as part of the Sevenoaks Summer Festival, with Nigel Nicolson and Edna Healey among the invited authors. In 2004 we decided to branch out into a two-week programme in the autumn as Sevenoaks Literary Celebration, and we have followed the same winning

formula ever since.

"Relying on a volunteer committee with a lot of help from Sevenoaks Bookshop, we have deliberately kept our annual programme to a dozen or so events, concentrating on quality rather than quantity."

For full details of the line-up, details of venues and how you can get tickets for some of the events, visit www.sevlfest.com.

Changing of the seasons

FANCY some fresh air and beautiful scenery? Then why not head to Bedgebury Pinetum this autumn.

The mix of deciduous and conifer trees creates a spectacular array of colour.



Big top sets up in the park

THE Moscow State Circus brings its latest spectacular show Gostinitisa to Dunorlan Park in Tunbridge Wells this weekend.

Performances in the heated big tent on Sunday take place at 2pm and 5pm on the final day of a string of shows that started in the park on Thursday evening.

Get on the dog and bone

COCKNEY duo Chas & Dave return to Folkestone, Dartford and Margate on their latest one-hour show, The Folly Story Live, featuring all their best known hits. The tour runs until the end of the year.



Antonio is a real funghi

CELEBRITY chef Antonio Carluccio will be appearing at the Canterbury Food and Drink Festival at the end of the month.

He will bring his mushroom market to the event from 11am to 1pm on September 22, showcasing innovative ways to cook the funghi as part of the tasty extravaganza.



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Look out, Boycie's in town

ENJOY an intimate night with Boycie from Only Fools & Horses as the actor John Chalis brings his one-man show to Deal's Astor Theatre on September 29.

Tickets, on sale now, cost £16.



It's Strictly a ticket rush

STRICTLY stars Anton Du Beke and Erin Boag will play two shows at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre next February.

Tickets for the shows, entitled from Broadway to Hollywood: Celebrating a Decade of Dance, on February 15 and 16 go on sale on Monday at 9am.

Ploughing match date set

THE 73rd annual East Kent Ploughing Match takes place at Quex Park in Birchington on September 27.

The popular event, which pulls in 4,000 visitors, will include a bird of prey display.



Feeling a little peckish?

ORPINGTON stages its first ever food festival next weekend, with a host of tasty treats to try and buy.

The event starts next Friday and is organised by the Orpington 1st Business Improvement District, which hopes to turn it into an annual event.

Fresh festival confirms The Hoosiers join bill

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

CHART-topping band The Hoosiers will complete the line-up on the main stage at the Hops and Harvest Boutique Festival next weekend.

The pop-rock group – best known for hits Goodbye Mr A and Worried About Ray – will take to the stage at Kent Life Heritage Farm Park, near Maidstone, ahead of headline act Starsailor on Saturday, September 9.

Newton Faulkner and Toploader are heading the bill on Sunday, September 10.

The Hoosiers are currently celebrating the tenth anniversary of their double-platinum debut album The Trick To Life, while also enjoying a new-found confidence following an extended hiatus and a return to form both in the studio and on stage.

Hops and Harvest Boutique Festival organisers have also confirmed Hannah Williams & The Affirmations have joined the line-up, fresh from having their song featured in the title track of Jay-Z's critically-acclaimed 4:44 album.



Jay-Z phoned Hannah Williams to personally ask whether he could use track Late Nights & Heartbreak and has thrust the Bristol-based soul band into the spotlight across a number of music genres.

Other names confirmed to be performing over the weekend include The Wholls (Sunday), The Peaks (Saturday) and Remedy Sounds (Sunday).

Kent Life's general manager Natalie Cox said: "The Hops and Harvest Boutique Festival is shaping up to be quite the

weekend in the country.

"With an incredibly talented music line-up, a mouth-watering choice of local ales and ciders, a good range of food, and plenty of activities for the children, including games, workshops and storytelling, there really is something for everyone."

Tickets for weekend access on both days are £50 for adults and £25 for children. Day tickets cost £30 for adults and £15 for children. Family tickets are also available.



STAGE: Newton Faulkner



HEADLINERS: Toploader above, and The Hoosiers, left

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How pop star overcame her personal turmoil

Former chart-topper and talent show favourite Alesha Dixon on conquering her self-doubt in style

ALESHA Dixon seems to have sure-footedly made her way to the top.

Beautiful, poised and self-assured, she's become one of Britain's favourite talent show judges, whether on Strictly Come Dancing or, currently, Britain's Got Talent. But privately, she's battled self-doubt and turmoil.

Throughout her teens and 20s - when she was riding high in hugely successful girl group Mis-Teeq before embarking on a solo singing career - her apparent confidence was a front. A lot of the time she was fearful and "scared", she reveals.

"I'd only ever known bumps in the road and I lacked confidence. Even when I was in Mis-Teeq, I tended to

rely on someone else to give me courage," admits the 38-year-old, who was rocked as a teenager seeing her father leave home and her mother suffer in a relationship with a man who was violent towards her.

"During my GCSEs, I missed an exam because of some things that were going on at home. I remember going to school later and crying my eyes out with my teacher because I felt I'd ruined my life. I put so much expectation on myself to be perfect and the fear of failure almost paralysed me. The fear I had about everything as a youngster took me a long time to get rid of and build myself up."

Her 20s were "very up and down, with some real lows", particularly in 2006 when her career and personal



POPULAR: Alesha Dixon

life collapsed simultaneously. Her record company dropped her and her marriage to rapper and member of So Solid Crew, MC Harvey, ended after only a year when she discovered he'd cheated on her with Popstars contestant, Javine Hylton.

"It really felt like a desperate situation. I had a lot of dark moments and was totally confused for a while. Although I'm a very determined, driven person, I felt like giving up," confides the singer.

"In the end I dusted myself off, pulled myself together and a couple of years later had a platinum-selling album. When I look back, I can see I've changed so much since then. I'm so much more secure, grounded and confident in who I am now," says Alesha.

who's happily settled with her partner of six years, backing dancer Azuka Ononye, and their three-year-old daughter, Azura Sienna.

"I understand I needed to go through those times in order to get to a better place, make better choices and become a stronger person."

She's certainly demonstrated her strength over the past six series of Britain's Got Talent and describes herself as the "most stubborn person" on the panel, which also includes Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden and David Walliams.

"Simon and I are born on the same day, are both Libras and are pretty similar characters. I tell him, 'You've met your match in me'. I stick up for myself 100 per cent," she says.

Stereophonics sell out

WELSH rockers Stereophonics have confirmed they are planning a special one-off show at Margate's Winter Gardens next Saturday.

The show, a warm-up to their appearance at the Radio 2 outdoor extravaganza in Hyde Park the following day with the likes of Take That and Shania Twain, saw tickets go on sale at noon on Wednesday and were completely sold out soon after.

Ale fans flock to mill

TICKETS are selling fast for the annual Crabble Corn Mill Cider and Ale Festival, which takes place in Dover later this month.

Featuring 60 ciders and 35 beers from around the country, and with prices pegged at £3 a pint, the event runs from September 15-17. Tickets for the Friday are available only in advance, for the other days, you can buy on the door.

WI's Titanic night out

MEOPHAM Evening Women's Institute hosts a Tales of the Titanic event at 7.15pm on September 18 at the St John's Centre in Wrotham Road.

Open for all to attend, it costs £3.50 for visitors and tickets will be available on the door. For more details call Glynis on 01474 813742.

Anyone interested in joining the WI can join up on the night.

Music is the food of love

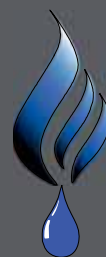
CELEBRATED food critic Jay Rayner brings an evening of music and anecdotes to the Astor Theatre in Deal later this month.

The Jay Rayner Quartet - A Night of Food and Agony - will include music related to tasty treats, along with tales of life growing up as the son of the late, great agony aunt Claire Rayner.

The show is on September 28 at 8pm.

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OLD FATHER TIME

Get on your bike and enjoy surroundings to keep fit and healthy

WHILE the summer may be drawing to a close, for many of us it is all too soon to return to a sedate lifestyle after weeks of getting out and about and enjoying the warm weather and holiday season.

The good news, is that Medway is particularly well suited to ensuring we can keep active - and often for little or no additional cost.

From the likes of Capstone Farm Country Park which sprawls out across 114 hectares of former farmland and is now a popular destination for those seeking peace and quiet or wanting to stretch their legs.

In fact, it is one of the perfect places to go to start building up your stamina. Merely walking around the site will be good for you, while you can

then start to build up breaking out into a light jog. And when you do, there's a 6.2 mile (10k) running trail for you to start tackling chunks of.

But for many, cycling is the preferred option and the good news is that there are an increasing number of routes which make for the perfect ride.

Connecting the villages of Higham, Cliffe, Cooling, High Halstow, Hoo and Upnor, the Heron Trail - or National Cycling Route 179 to give it its official title - links with Route 1 of the Sustrans National Cycle Network to provide a circular cycle trail which is around 18 miles (29km) long and takes about two and a half hours to cycle.

Just four years ago, Medway Council invested £10,000 in new signing on the route.

The cycle trail provides a combination of rural and maritime interest, with spectacular views of the River Medway and River Thames. There are several detour routes, including the RSPB's Northward Hill reserve famed for the herons which have given the trail its name.

On the way are spectacular rural and estuary views and you can visit several places of historical interest, including castles, churches and houses.

What's more when you need to take a breather there are a host of good resting places and pubs to refuel before getting on your way.

If getting a bike sounds like too much hard work, what about simply building up for a regular gentle run? Parkrun has been rightly acclaimed for its ability to encourage



RIDE: There is a circular cycle path which is perfect for fresh air and fitness

people to get fit for free, with their regular timed 5k runs.

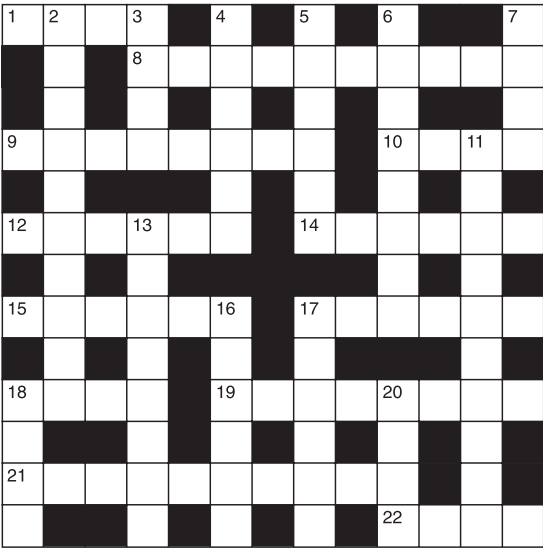
The one at the Great Lines Heritage Park at 9am on a Saturday morning attracts more than 250 runners each week. You can go at any pace that is comfortable and there's no pressure to keep up with the rest.

Plus there's nothing more motivating than always trying to eclipse your previous time.

So, embrace the autumn - hopefully there's plenty of good weather left for us to enjoy - and get yourself on the road to a healthier lifestyle.

PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

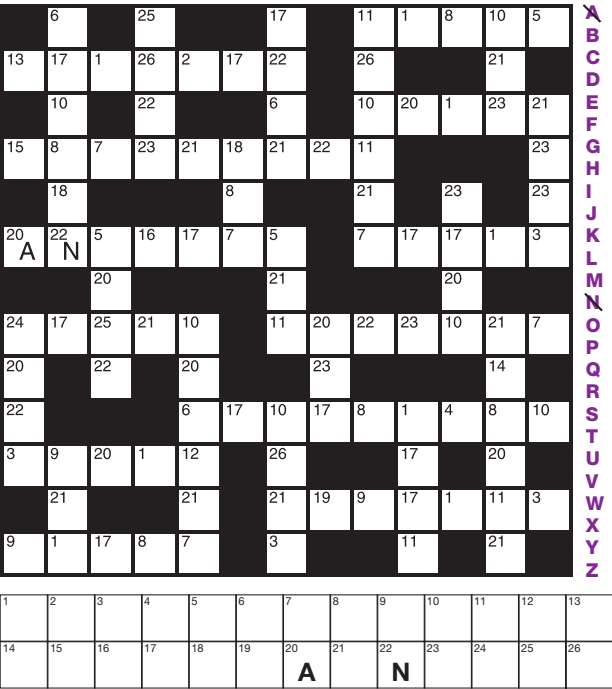
- Across
- 1. Sort (4)
 - 8. Significance (10)
 - 9. Oblique (8)
 - 10. Chopped (4)
 - 12. Loiter (6)
 - 14. Threefold (6)
 - 15. Scatter (6)
 - 17. Reply (6)
- Down
- 18. Carry (4)
 - 19. Quarter circle (8)
 - 21. Obstacle (10)
 - 22. Simple (4)
- Across
- 5. Shining (6)
 - 6. Impetuosity (8)
 - 7. Thin (4)
 - 11. Desert (10)
 - 13. Left (8)
 - 16. Fluid (6)
 - 17. Rouse (6)
 - 18. Edge (4)
 - 20. Speed (4)

Cryptic

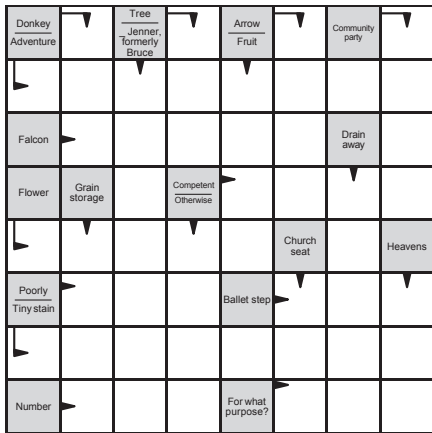
- Across
- 1. Fail to keep up a legend (4)
 - 8. It's something to go on (5,5)
 - 9. Abandoned ship (8)
 - 10. A boy naturally opposed to the current trend (4)
 - 12. It's not certain the doctor will come in the storm (6)
 - 14. Not in a good mood to sail (3,3)
 - 15. I'm back with anger that is more apparent than real (6)
 - 17. Athletes may take it in their stride (6)
 - 18. It's bent on submission (4)
 - 19. Final bid to secure an agreement? (8)
 - 21. Emphasise, in a manner of speaking (10)
 - 22. Told to go North in a group (4)
- Down
- 2. A neat tailor may make it if ordered (10)
 - 3. Illness makes the French leave the league (4)
 - 4. Gather I've to support a revolutionary uprising (6)
 - 5. How one should march on foot (6)
 - 6. Frank or firm counsellor (8)
 - 7. Wait for support (4)
 - 11. Unpopular second feature that's apt to grow on one (6,4)
 - 13. A small band or two allowed (8)
 - 16. Former name to cause a stir (6)
 - 17. Shelter for fliers (6)
 - 18. Some dark, handsome ruler in the East (4)
 - 20. Is sorry for a trick, we hear (4)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter. For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



Arrowword

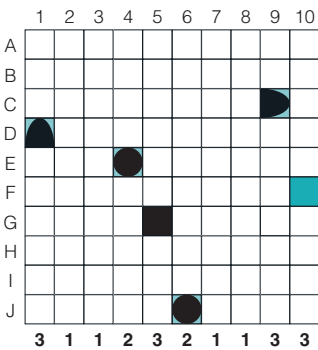


Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

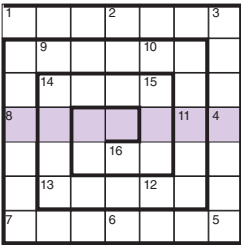
Battleships

Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET
1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



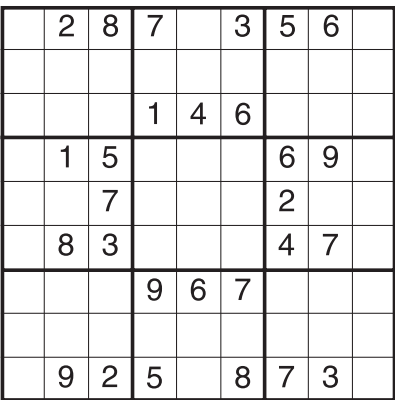
Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

- 1. Ring of light
- 2. Gemstone
- 3. Big cat
- 4. Require
- 5. Pointed missile
- 6. Small branch
- 7. Spiritual guide
- 8. American state
- 9. Cure
- 10. Den
- 11. Paper quantity
- 12. Insect
- 13. Suspend
- 14. Righteous
- 15. Peace bird
- 16. Boy's name

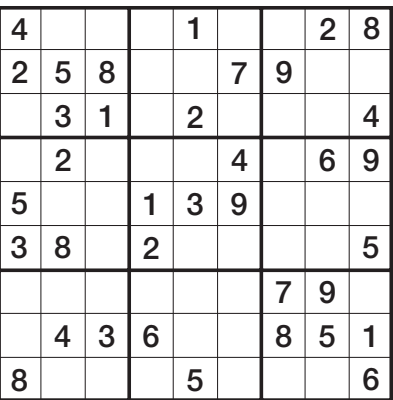
Keyword clue: A mythical creature

SUDOKU

Hard



Easy



Solutions

Double Crossword
Across: 1 Saga; 8
Cryptic
Green light; 9 Gambler; 10 Eddy; 12 Gamble; 14 Put out; 15 Mirage; 17 Hurdle; 18 Knee; 19 Contract; 21
Accentuate; 22 Sent.
Down: 2 Alteration; 3 Agree; 4 Derive; 5 Stay; 6 Director; 7 Step; 11 Double chin; 13 Bracelet; 16 Excite; 17 Hangar; 18 Khan; 20 Rues.
Quick
Across: 1 Kind; 20 Fries.
Indicative; 3 Dine; 4
22 Easy; Down: 2
21 Impediment;
18 Bear; 19 Quadrant;
15 Disp; 17 Answer;
12 Bawle; 14 Treble;
8 Importance; 9
Lion; 4 Need; 5 Dart;
6 Twig; 7 Gurr; 8
1 Halo; 2 Opal; 3
24 V; 25 W; 26 I
Word Spiral
21 E; 22 N; 23 G;
18 M; 19 X; 20 A;
15 J; 16 B; 17 O;
12 K; 13 H; 14 O;
9 P; 10 L; 11 T;
5 Y; 6 C; 7 D; 8 U;
1 R; 2 Z; 3 S; 4 F;
Codeword
20 Rate.
17 Awaken; 18 Brim;
Departed; 16 Liquid;
11 Wilderness; 13
Rashness; 7 Lean;
Oppose; 5 Bright; 6

Double Crossword
Across: 1 Saga; 8
Cryptic
Green light; 9 Gambler; 10 Eddy; 12 Gamble; 14 Put out; 15 Mirage; 17 Hurdle; 18 Knee; 19 Contract; 21
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Oppose; 5 Bright; 6



I'll have my eggs Fabergé

Expect to be wowed and dazzled in Russia's cultural capital St Petersburg, says **Mike Pickup**

With 42 islands and 342 bridges over canals and rivers, St Petersburg is often referred to as the Venice of the North. This city of five million people has more than 300 museums and, before the Revolution, had around 1,000 palaces. The best known is the huge Winter Palace overlooking the south bank of the Neva River. The original, made of wood and built for Peter the Great, was replaced by the current building, the design approved by Empress Elizabeth in 1754. It is simply stunning.

The Winter Palace is home to the world-famous Hermitage museum. This amazing collection consists of around three million works of art, but even with five other buildings now dedicated to its display, only

around 15% of the collection is on view at any one time.

Top of my priority list, however, was a visit to the Fabergé museum. This priceless private collection belongs to Viktor Vekselberg. Opened in 2013, it's located in the Shuvalov Palace, restored specifically to house the exhibition, and contains four thousand jaw-dropping works of art. It's the world's largest Fabergé collection and includes nine Easter Eggs.

I went from there to the Church of the Spilled Blood, constructed to commemorate the assassination of Alexander II. Its colourful onion-shaped domes are matched by an amazing interior that initially appears to be painted and gilded but actually consists of nearly eighty-



'Stunning': The Winter Palace in St Petersburg.

Picture: MIKE PICKUP

five thousand square feet of mosaic tiles.

A drive along the city's main street took me past the Mariinsky Theatre. Completed in 1860, it's home to Ballet, Opera and Orchestral companies and is where Swan Lake was first performed in 1895. The nearby Stroganov Palace was home to the Counts Stroganov. If this sounds vaguely familiar then you're right. The Stroganovs were rich peasants who never lost track of their roots. They fed the local poor of St Petersburg with a beef stew that included mustard and sour

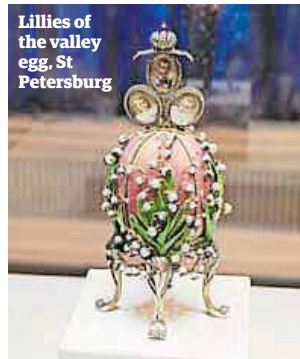
cream, hence Beef Stroganoff.

Keen to see more, I took a 30-mile drive to the Palace of Peterhof. Peter the Great was inspired by the palace at Versailles to build an out-of-town palace with ornamental grounds and fountains. However, much of what visitors now see was as a result of his daughter, Elizabeth, who created the current Palace and formal gardens. If the word 'bling' had been around in those days, the many gilded statues would be a classic example; it makes Versailles look a little dowdy. This is Russia at its very best.

Factbox

Visitors by ship are allowed 72 hours visa-free entry but excursions must be booked either with the ship or online with an approved company, otherwise visas are required. Fourteen nights aboard Saga Pearl II departing Dover on May 22 2018 costs from £2,457pp. This includes transport to and from Dover, all meals, drinks with meals, gratuities, wifi and optional travel insurance. The ship calls at Gdansk, Tallinn, St Petersburg (two days), Kotka, Visby, Karlskrona and Kiel. Call 0800 50 50 30 or visit www.saga.co.uk/cruises

Lillies of the valley egg, St Petersburg



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It's time we saw some real justice

AFTER persistent refusals, the belated and begrudging concession of a public inquiry into the contaminated blood scandal by the prime minister wins her few plaudits or votes.

In a distressing coincidence, August marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of The Nuremberg Code - drawn up to prevent evil perversions of the medical ethics enshrined in the Hippocratic Oath.

The 'criminal cover up on an industrial scale' revealed recently by Andy Burnham details clear breaches of The Nuremberg Code: illegal non-consensual testing on patients including children, falsification of medical records or their deliberate destruction, withholding of test results of HIV and HCV status leading to the endangerment of unknowingly infecting partners and family members...the list goes on.

The haemophilic community, small and vulnerable as it is, does not deserve to be treated in such a callous manner. Living with haemophilia is, in itself, a permanent and all consuming challenge.

The inquiry must consider all aspects of this 40 year shameful betrayal - "the worst treatment disaster in the history of the NHS" - and those responsible for this wrongdoing held fully to account.

Steve Dymond,
Broadstairs

Motorists are not public enemy

AS always, well said Terry Hudson [KoS, letters, 20.08]. I can't believe the 'holier than thou' people who paint motorists as wicked pariahs, who should be treated as public enemies.

So these people never use cars, buses, trains, aeroplanes and any other form of mechanised transport?

The economy would collapse without the billions generated by motoring, motorists being the most fleeced, penalised, taxed and persecuted of all.

As for pollution, the latest flawed saviour electric cars, is just a means of transferring pollution to the numerous extra power stations that would have to be built. Can you imagine as millions came home from work in the evening, plugging in their high current chargers and the lights dimming?

For sure the whole issue was never thought through, right from the very beginning, as we see from the many unsolved problems and the piecemeal approach to solving them. But then what can you expect from the people who gave us an aircraft carrier with no planes, paid £3 million to support Abu Hamza and his family and pay

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Time to focus energy on one hospital site

IT is a real shame the East Kent Hospitals Trust [KoS, last week] is not run by true business people; those who have actually run a large company.

If you were a company you would create your warehouse at the centre of wheel, with a 25 mile radius around it. This would mean all parts of the delivery (incoming and outgoing) would be within a 30-minute road journey, ideal for heart attacks and stroke victims.

This would mean you could close a secondary distribution centre that has a catchment area radius halfway out to sea.

You would have your distribution centre as near as possible to major road networks for speedy access.

You would not have a distribution centre in the middle of town where access is restricted thus slowing down access. You would have your centre where the highest population lives out of the three areas you have. This suggestion also means you would have the highest

catchment area for obtaining staff.

You would not have two main distribution centres with vehicles going being between each back and forth depending on what product you want to collect or deliver.

Surely the long term option is to rebuild Kent & Canterbury Hospital on the current site. Once built, close the QEOM so there are no further overheads, or turn it into non emergency operational centre for specialism. Ashford catchment area emergencies can either go to Pembury or K&C hospital depending on which side of the catchment area the patients are.

Whilst all the consultations and adjustments are continually being made and using financial resources, there come a time when a real cost effective long term business plan has to be implemented thus reducing costs of sticky plaster being applied to patchwork changes for years to come.

J Smith
Canterbury

his legal fees, [while NHS patients died from a lack of money], who waste hundreds of billions in the NHS, MoD, NGOs, etc, and then saddled us with a £1.7 trillion debt?

Phil Granger,
West Malling

Obama did little as Trump shines

IN his response to my praise of President Trump [KoS, letters, two weeks ago] your correspondent Ben Murphy completely ignores the fact

that I was pointing out that, in the dispute between the USA and North Korea, the blame lies with the authoritarian regime of the latter, not the democratic government of the former.

However Mr Murphy is clearly a supporter of the liberal establishment which dominates both the UK and the USA, and which, contrary to its complacent self image, in fact shares all the arrogance and anti democratic attitudes of a third world one party state.

When faced with the desire of the electorate, as shown by a democratic vote, to leave the European Union,

those such as Mr Murphy describes this choice as a "monumental folly" and a "caper", and do all they can to frustrate the will of the people.

In the USA the liberals, having lost the general election, are now seeking to undermine the president, regardless of the fact that a majority of the American people supported, and still support him. These are more than merely expressions of legitimate opposition, and show the smug contempt with which these people regard the opinions of the ordinary voter.

Incidentally, President Obama, despite the adulation with which he is regarded by the liberal left, did little to fulfil the slogans of "yes we can" and "change we can believe in" which helped him win power. He was all talk and no action.

Colin Bullen,
Tonbridge

Anna is a real asset to breakfast

I MUST be listening to a different programme to that being listened to by T Jones [KoS, letters, last week].

I am not at all disappointed by Anna Cookson on the BBC Radio Kent breakfast show. I think she is excellent and that is not an adjective I would have applied to Maggie Doyle on the same programme.

John Greenhill,
via email

...but homeless piece misjudged

ANNA Cookson is a far cry from previous co-hosts, and her confidence that she knew what it was like to be homeless after one hour pretending on the streets of Tunbridge Wells last week was almost laughable. Bring back Maggie!

Peter Turner,
Sittingbourne

Crying over bell? Get a grip now!

PRINCE William recently said he couldn't understand why people were crying about the death of his mother when they didn't even know her.

I could understand this as some people are far more emotive than others. What I couldn't understand were pictures recently of people crying as Big Ben struck its final bong before being mothballed.

Frustration, annoyance, anger even, but surely not tears? The politically correct health and safety junta strikes again, unlike Big Ben. It's enough to make you weep!

S Reeves,
Herne Bay

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.
- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

kent-life.co.uk kentnews.co.uk



Sandwich Festival
by **Alan Blackburn**
from **Canterbury**

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Warner Bembridge Coast, Isle of Wight
Friday 5 January, 2018 - Quote: BE1-KOS

GN Holidays & Voyages are taking over Warner's Bembridge Coast hotel again in early January 2018 - our 10th year in a row. Our must-do annual party, for over 40s only, has guests returning year after year to 'Carry On' celebrating the New Year. With a packed entertainment programme featuring original 60s bands Union Gap UK and The Cufflinks plus The Beached Boys, Vicki Lambert's tribute to 60s divas, great food, Free drinks from 6pm to midnight nightly, and free car ferry crossing, a great start to 2018 is assured.

INCLUDED: Free drinks 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights standard en-suite chalet - upgrade to main hotel building from £30pp • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free car ferry crossing • Free parking

Half price drinks Over 40s only £10pp deposit

3 nights half board PLUS £149pp

CLASSIC PARTY BREAK

Mamma Mia & Super 70s Spring Party

Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast
Friday 9 March, 2018 - Quote: MS3-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for a Spring blast - for over 40s only - as we rock the weekend away to the sounds of the 70s. Our brilliant entertainment bill features Abba's Angels and a screening of Mamma Mia the Movie, Showaddywaddy, Saturday Night Bee Gees, Little Eagle, a celebration of Neil Diamond PLUS house band Sounds Imperial. You'll enjoy non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and half-price drinks at this rockin' party weekend.

INCLUDED: Half-price drinks all weekend - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers lunch times & evenings from Friday night to Sunday night • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - £149pp - bed linen and towels included - club upgrade available - £179pp • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free parking

Free Drinks £50 deposit

8 days half board PLUS £1199pp

Monaco Historic Grand Prix & Portofino

By Rail from St Pancras & Ebbsfleet
7 May, 2018 - Quote: GP5/6-KOS

The biennial Monaco Historic Grand Prix is run on the famous Formula 1 circuit with classic Grand Prix cars from the 1940s to 1980s. With a seated grandstand ticket for the final race day, access to cars and drivers in the harbour side paddock, excursions to Portofino, San Remo and Dolceacqua, free drinks every night at our 3* hotel on the Italian Riviera, this will be a nostalgic experience to treasure.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout • Return rail travel from London St Pancras or Ebbsfleet • 1 day Grandstand seated ticket for race day • Visits to Portofino, Dolceacqua and San Remo • 6 nights three-star half-board accommodation in San Bartolomeo, Italy, with free drinks at the hotel every evening • 1 night 3-star accommodation in Nice • Transfers abroad

2 nights half board £159pp

Sounds of the 60s Spring Party Break

Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing
23 March, 2018 - WO3-KOS

Join us in Worthing for a 60s music themed party with live entertainment each night, including The Cufflinks and Dave Grant (ex-Paper Lace). The Chatsworth is one of the finest hotels on the south coast, providing good food and comfortable accommodation, located just a stone's throw from the sea and a

Entertainment Over 40s only £10pp deposit

short stroll to the town centre.

INCLUDED: 2 nights sharing an en-suite twin or double bedroom • 2 dinners & 2 breakfasts • Entertainment each evening



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Are you able to benefit from scheme?

THE Motability Scheme currently provides more than 600,000 disabled people and their families with affordable, convenient, trouble-free motoring, enabling them to exchange their mobility allowance to lease a new car, powered wheelchair or scooter.

Who can apply?

Anyone who receives one of the following mobility benefits and has at least 12 months award length remaining when they apply, can use it to pay for their lease:

Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance.

Enhanced Rate Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment.

War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement.

Armed Forces Independence Payment.

A parent or carer can apply on behalf of a child, aged three or older, and non-drivers can still apply, nominating up to two people to drive for them.

How does it work?

Customers simply transfer their



DEALS: Check out your local dealer to see what they offering for those using the Motability scheme

mobility allowance to lease a suitable vehicle which includes insurance, tyre and windscreen replacement, servicing, breakdown cover and road tax.

Customers can choose a brand new car from a selection of more than 4,000 models, from the major manufacturers. A similar scheme is

available for powered wheelchairs and scooters.

Cars are supplied through a national network of some 4,500 Motability Dealer Partners. There is also a network of accredited suppliers of powered wheelchairs and scooters.

Adaptations to cars

For most Motability Scheme

customers, a standard car or automatic is suitable for their needs, but around 10% need adaptations to enable them to drive safely, or travel in comfort as a passenger.

As part of the lease, a range of popular adaptations are available at no additional cost, such as push-pull hand controls and left-foot accelera-

tors.

Providing additional financial help

Motability may also be able to assist those customers who need additional financial help to obtain the mobility solution they need.

■ For more information phone 0300 456 4566 or visit www.motability.co.uk



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Fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km) for the All-New Kia Picanto range: Urban 40.4 (7.0) 50.4 (5.6), Extra Urban 62.8 (4.5) – 76.3 (3.7), Combined 52.3 (5.4) – 64.2 (4.4), CO₂ emissions 124 – 101g/km. MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Model shown: All-New Kia Picanto 'GT-Line S' 1.25 83bhp 5-speed manual at £14,200 including optional chargeable clear white paint £250. All-New Kia Picanto range available from £9,450. 7 year / 100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty. For full terms and exclusions visit www.kia.com/uk.



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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the cars shown are: urban 68.9 (4.1)–80.7 (3.5); extra-urban 78.5 (3.6)–91.1 (3.1); combined 74.3 (3.8)–85.6 (3.3). The official CO₂ emissions are 99–85g/km. Figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EU Legislation and may not reflect real life driving results.

*Advance payment offers are only valid for Motability applications to 30th September 2017 and are correct at time of going to press.  Motability is a trademark of Motability. Registered charity number 299745.

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www.motorline.co.uk/renault



Motability
The leading car scheme for disabled people

Motability helped turn my life around

AILSA, 76, suffers from rheumatoid and osteoarthritis. Before she found out about the Motability Scheme, she rarely left her house.

"For years I didn't get out much and, when I did, it was with the help of my husband or close friends," she explained.

"I needed a vehicle with adaptations to help me drive. My husband and I did some research, but it was too expensive to convert a car ourselves. I was so pleased when I found out about the Motability Scheme.

"My car has been adapted so that I drive with a steering wheel ball. It is also wheelchair accessible so I can travel with my powered wheelchair. This means I am able to drive again and I don't need to rely on lifts from others."

She has lived an adventurous life, having lived and worked in Jamaica and Canada, and is used to being busy and active.

"When we moved back, I didn't leave the village for the first three years and could only go out if my



BOOST: Ailsa has felt the benefits of getting her car specially adapted for her needs

husband dropped me off exactly where I needed to be so I didn't have to walk far. Now, with my Motability Scheme car, I don't have to worry – I can drive where I want, when I want.

"I now have my independence and

the peace of mind from knowing that, if something does go wrong with the vehicle, you can get rapid assistance and won't face heavy bills and that is wonderful."

When Ailsa was diagnosed with

rheumatoid and osteoarthritis, she did not let this stop her adventurous side. Now a wheelchair user, she has joined a wheelchair dancing club.

"I like to keep busy and I have a lot of hobbies," she said.

As well as her wheelchair danc-

ing, she is also a disability network co-ordinator and a director of music at her local parish church.

"Having my Motability Scheme car enables me to keep my hobbies and independence. I am so grateful for this," she added.

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C-HR Icon 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2T VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 38.1 (7.4), Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1), Combined 47.8 (5.9). CO2 Emissions 135g/km. All mpg and CO2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.
*Model shown is C-HR Icon 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £695 Advance Payment. Subject to availability. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Please note that a total of 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st July and 30th September 2017.

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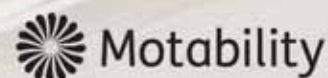
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Other popular models are: ŠKODA Fabia Hatch Monte Carlo 1.0 TSI 110PS DSG with £95 advance payment; ŠKODA Rapid Spaceback SE Tech 1.0 TSI 95PS DSG available with £495 advance payment and ŠKODA Superb Hatch SE 2.0 TDI 150PS DSG available with £1,895 advance payment.



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*To qualify for this offer you must be in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance, War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement, Enhanced Rate Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment or Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP). Models shown are not UK specification. Prices and specifications are accurate at time of publication. Offers may be varied or withdrawn at any time and are not available in conjunction with any other offer. Participating retailers only. Subject to availability. Valid for applications to Motability from 4 July 2017 to 30 September 2017. Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 31.0 (9.1) to 72.4 (3.9); Extra Urban 44.1 (6.4) to 88.3 (3.2); Combined 38.2 (7.4) to 80.7 (3.5). CO₂ emissions for the ŠKODA range are 170 to 90 g/km. Standard EU test figures are for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

How it helped put me on road to freedom

JAMES, 21, was born with cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair.

He joined the Motability Scheme in 2001 as a passenger and, when he became old enough to begin learning to drive, he applied to Motability for a grant towards driving lessons. He is now learning to drive in his Motability Scheme car which has been adapted to suit his needs.

"Before Motability, I used to be completely reliant on my parents to take me where I needed to go," he said. "I am now able to take driving lessons in my own Motability Scheme car as it has been fitted with mechanical hand controls and steering aids. I cannot wait to pass my test and be able to drive myself to and from college."

James does a lot of wheelchair racing and his Motability Scheme car enables him to travel to competitions and training.

"I have a lot of equipment to take with me, including my wheelchair and racing chair, so the car is perfect for my needs," he added.



DELIGHTED: James is learning to drive so he can get himself to and from his college

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10	MERCEDES CLC 160 COUPE, met white, 42k only, history, alloys.....	£6,995
59	KIA PICANTO 1.1, black, 5dr, 38k.....	£3,315
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09	HYUNDAI i10 1.2 STYLE, silver, 27k only, history, a/c, alloys, sunroof.....	ONLY £3,795
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63	MERCEDES E220 CDI AMG (NEW) AUTOMATIC, 1 owner, 30k, met silver, history, leather/suede, heated seats, sat nav, Outstanding.....	£16,995
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10	HYUNDAI i20 AUTOMATIC, met grey, 24k only, alloys, a/c, 5dr, excellent.....	ONLY £5,495
59	MERCEDES CLC 180, black, 62k, alloys, leather, a/c, history, excellent.....	£6,495
59	VW TIGUAN 2.0 TDI TURBO DIESEL AUTOMATIC, black, 69k, history, alloys, a/c etc.....	£8,995
59	HYUNDAI i30 AUTOMATIC DIESEL, 52k, met black, a/c, alloys.....	£4,795
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59	NISSAN PIXO 1.0 N-TEC AUTOMATIC, 18k only, red, a/c, 5dr, low tax/ins.....	£4,195
09	NISSAN NOTE 1.6 TECHNA AUTOMATIC, silver, 67k, excellent condition.....	£4,795
09	HYUNDAI i20 AUTOMATIC, Blue, 5dr, 32k only, Hist, Alloys, A/C, nice car.....	£4,495
04	VAUXHALL ASTRA, (NEW) AUTO, Met Blue, 40k, A/C, Excellent.....	£1,795

DIESELS

15	KIA RIO DIESEL, 5dr, Lady Owner, 16k only, free tax, 70/80 mpg, reverse camera, cruise, A/C, Alloys.....	£9,495
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62	MERCEDES C250 SPORT, silver, 48k, history, leather, alloys, sat, mats, outstanding.....	£12,995
62	FORD KUGA DIESEL, black, 40k, alloys, lovely car, cruise, half leather, history.....	£11,295
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CONVERTIBLES

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05	KIA PICANTO AUTOMATIC, Red, 5dr, 40k, history.....	£1,995
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LICENSING ACT 2003:

Application for Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that Canterbury Tails (Kent) Limited has applied to Canterbury City Council for the GRANT of a Premises Licence to operate the following Regulated Activities: supply of alcohol (on and off the premises) from 10:00 to 00:00hrs Monday to Saturday and 10:00 to 23:30hrs on Sundays; Late Night Refreshment (indoors and outdoors) from 23:00 to 00:00hrs Monday to Saturday and 23:00 to 23:30hrs on Sundays; All Regulated Activities to cease at 22:00hrs every day in the outside area marked on the plan at the front of the premises. All at the following premises: Canterbury Tails, 35 St. Margaret's Street, Canterbury CT1 2TG.

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at www.canterbury.gov.uk/licensing or at Council Offices, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YW tel. 01227 862000 by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Any person wishing to submit representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by 27/09/2017. The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that their identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Sub Committee and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

Notices under the Trustee Act 1925

GUINNESS MAHON GROUP PENSION SCHEME (Formerly the "Guinness Peat Group Pension Plan", the "Lewis & Peat Group Pension Plan") and the "Henderson Crosthwaite Retirement Benefits Scheme"
NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND BENEFICIARIES UNDER SECTION 27 OF THE TRUSTEE ACT 1925

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to section 27 of the Trustee Act 1925, that the Trustee of the Guinness Mahon Group Pension Scheme (the "Scheme") is finalising its winding-up and wishes to trace any person who is a member of the Scheme or who has a claim against, or entitlement from, the Scheme.

If you were an employee of the Investec, Guinness Mahon, Guinness Peat or Lewis & Peat groups of companies and consider that you may be entitled to benefits from the Guinness Mahon Group Pension Scheme and have not already been contacted, please write to the Scheme administrator, Capita, at the address given further below with full details of your claim and any benefits that you think you are entitled to, including your full name, address, NI Number, dates of employment and copies of any relevant papers. This information must be received by 31 October 2017. Please be aware that these companies have also operated other pension schemes in the past, and this announcement only relates to the Guinness Mahon Group Pension Scheme.

After 31 October 2017, the Trustee will proceed with winding-up the Scheme and may have regard only to those claims and entitlements of which it had prior written notice. The Trustee will not be liable to or in respect of any person whose claim or entitlement had not been so notified to it by 31 October 2017. If the Trustee, or Capita, is already in contact with you (for example if you have received correspondence from them or are receiving a pension) you do not need to reply to this notice as your interest has already been noted.

The Trustee of the Guinness Mahon Group Pension Scheme

c/o Capita

Central Administration Department

Hartshead House

2 Cutlers Gate

Sheffield

S4 7TL

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Abbey Court caters for pupils aged 3-19 with Severe Learning Difficulties, and is currently located on 2 Strood sites; Cliffe Road (Nursery & Primary) and Rede Court Road (Secondary & Further Education). The Primary provision is a purpose built premises, newly opened in April 2017. Working hours are 32.5 p/w (8.45am – 3.45pm), term time only. Comprehensive training and induction will be provided. Childcare experience, or relevant childcare qualifications are desirable.

Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post.

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure.

**For an application pack, please write to/telephone
(stating the role for which you are applying):**

**Mrs Linda Taylor, School Business Manager
Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent. ME2 3SP
(01634 338236)**

Please note CV's will not be accepted.

Closing date: 12.9.17

Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEOM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

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Staff Nurse Ward (Margate)

Part Time – 30 hours per week

Closing Date – TBC

Salary – £13.75 per hour

Interview Date – TBC

Qualifications and Experience

- Registered Nurse 1st level
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- Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Demonstrates a patient focus approach
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to work independently and as part of a multi-disciplinary team
- Committed to providing a quality clinical service

Housekeeper (Margate)

Part Time – 20 or 30 hours per week, over 7 day working rota

Salary – £7.69 per hour

Closing Date – TBC

Interview Date – TBC

Qualifications and Experience

- Previous housekeeping experience (preferably within a clinical environment)
- Previous experience in a customer facing role
- Good working knowledge of Word/Excel/Outlook
- Mathematics and English (GCSE or equivalent) Grade C or above
- Ability to recognize and report situations affecting patient care
- Able to work independently and as part of a team
- Outstanding communication and motivational skills
- Committed to providing excellence in service

To discuss either of these opportunities, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Daisy Bannister, HR Assistant 01304 222 690

Previous applicants need not apply

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Alternatively, please contact Carina Pieries, HR Assistant

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Former captain leaves Priestfield

Josh Wright terminated his contract at Gillingham this week

Football

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

GILLINGHAM have confirmed their former captain Josh Wright has terminated his contract at Priestfield and left the club.

Rumours had been circling all week that the midfielder's departure was imminent, following a fall-out with head coach Andy Pennock and claims he refused to be on the substitutes bench for the Gills' 3-3 draw with Southend on Saturday - a claim Wright strongly denies.

The club said in a statement on Thursday morning that the player, who scored 14 goals from midfield last season and was named the Gills' player of the year, signed the relevant forms on Wednesday and is now a free agent.

"Everyone at the club would like to thank Josh for his services and we wish him well for the future," a spokesperson said.

In his own statement to supporters on social media, Wright said he would have preferred to stay at the club and pledged to return to Priestfield one way or another in the future.

He said: "I have dreaded this day and never ever wanted it to happen but I suppose it has to happen one day in football. I would prefer to close on the highs and great memories rather than dwell on how it finished.

"Where do I start - from 2009 with the promotion to the hat-trick of penalties at the Rainham End, being named captain for a club so close to my heart to player-of-the-year, the cup run last season to hearing my



DEPARTING: Josh Wright

Pictures: ADY KERRY

name sung by you great fans.

"I would happily have spent the rest of my career at a place I call home but it wasn't to be in the end.

"I'll leave you with this...I promise you I will be back in some capacity one day if welcomed and will remain a fan for life."

The Gills did make a deadline day signing to replace Wright by bringing

in midfielder Sean Clare on loan from Sheffield Wednesday.

Head coach Andy Pennock said: "I'm really pleased to have got Sean on board, he is a midfielder who isn't shy of taking people on and is different to the other players we have in the building.

"Myself and the staff are looking forward to working with him."

Sittingbourne teenager conquers all in Wales

Motorsport

WITH a break in the World Supersport 300 series, Luke Hopkins kept up his track action with a wildcard entry in the Thundersport Superteens series last weekend.

Round seven of the series took place at the coastal circuit in Anglesey, Wales and the Sittingbourne teenager put on an all-conquering performance winning all four races on a track he hadn't seen before.

The Superteens series was once an Aprilia-only championship but is now open to various manufacturers.

Over the years it has seen the likes of Casey Stoner, Cal Crutchlow, Sam Lowes and Danny Kent take part and go on and make their name in



STAR: Photo by Andrew Houseman

motorcycle racing.

Luke made a great start and led the first race from start to finish. He led by 5.7 seconds and beat his qualify-

ing lap time with a 1:17.067.

In the second race, he improved his winning margin to 8.7 seconds as well as cutting the fastest lap time to 1:16.831.

Luke dropped to fourth after a slow start in the third but quickly raced into the front, finishing the race with a 1:16.707.

With one more race to go Luke had eyes on the lap record. He launched from the start line and instantly set about setting a fast pace.

In the early laps he was two seconds quicker than the rest of the field. Pushing hard he was less than half a second from the lap record.

Towards the end of the race he came across several back markers which hindered his hoped of beating the lap record. He still went on to win the fourth race by almost 13 seconds.

Sport Shorts

» Email sports@kosmedia.co.uk or call Tom Pyman on 01233653477

All-rounder Stewart signs first pro contract

FAST-BOWLING all-rounder Grant Stewart has signed his first professional contract for Kent.

The 23-year-old has impressed in the second XI as joint top wicket-taker across all formats with 29 dismissals and scored an unbeaten 50 with the bat.

In club cricket, he has impressed with 30 wickets in the Shepherd Neame Kent Premier League for Sandwich Town including a best of 6/48 on Saturday.

A capable lower-order batsman, he has also notched a century and seven 50s.

The seamer said: "I've really enjoyed my time at Kent and I'm delighted to get the opportunity to work with the first-team squad and coaches.

"Becoming a full-time professional means I can dedicate more time to developing my game and I hope I can contribute to some success for the club."

Second XI coach Min Patel said: "Grant is a talented all-rounder with a tremendous work ethic. He has bowled with great skill and consistency this summer and will provide an excellent addition."



IMPRESSED: Min Patel



HOME: Ebbsfleet United's Stonebridge Road

Five academy talents handed deals at Fleet

EBBSFLEET United handed contracts to five of the club's finest academy prospects this week.

The quintet - Mustafe Ali, Harvie Gardiner, Arif Omar, Paul Ouattara and Bobby Sears - will form a key part of Danny Kedwell's U19 side in 2017/18, with three of them already tasting action in the Kent Reliance Senior Cup.

Gardiner, a centre back, played the

whole 90 minutes against Bromley while Ali and Omar were introduced as late substitutes.

Also on the bench was striker Sears - brother of Ipswich's Freddie - who was highly regarded at Thurrock, before being signed by Barnet in 2016 and has also played for Cockfosters.

Fleet go into this weekend's action an incredible 30 games unbeaten.

Kinslow ready for Epsom bout

MEDWAY'S Carl 'Energy' Kinslow has promised to deliver a complete performance as he prepares for one of the biggest fights of his career next Saturday.

The 32-year-old, who owns the Mind, Movement, Alchemy Gym in Gillingham, has been one of the breakout stars of the televised Queensbury Boxing League competi-

tion this year.

Speaking ahead of his battle with Tommy McDonagh at Epsom Racecourse he said: "My prediction is you will see my intelligence and hunger and I say this with a humble mind. Having had fights in MMA, BJJ, freestyle wrestling, K1 and now boxing, I envision a win in a complete fashion."

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